



2024

REPORT TO CONSTITUENTS



Elevating Educational Excellence
Through Accreditation

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ABOUT THE ACEN

VISION

The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) vision is to be the global standard in nursing education accreditation by fostering excellence through continuous improvement, innovation, and advocacy.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Enhance Program
Support and
Satisfaction

Engage and Support
Our Dedicated Peer
Evaluator Volunteers

Promote the
Importance of ACEN
Accreditation

Build a Growth Model
for Accredited Nursing
Education Programs

Enhance Program Support and Satisfaction

- **Provide continuous support** throughout the accreditation process
- **Improve communications** to keep our customers informed and engaged
- **Foster connections** with key federal, global, and stakeholder organizations
- **Continue to enhance and deliver** products and services that meet partner accreditation needs
- **Strengthen relationships** with state boards for broader accreditation

Engage and Support Our Dedicated Peer Evaluator Volunteers

- **Increase peer evaluator** representation to ensure diverse perspectives
- **Implement strategies** to retain dedicated volunteers
- **Recognize and celebrate** the contributions of our volunteers
- **Foster a culture** of continuous improvement in results-oriented education

Promote the Importance of ACEN Accreditation

- **Raise the visibility** of ACEN as the global accreditor of choice across all program types
- **Communicate through various channels** about developments that impact and enhance accreditation
- **Communicate our unique resources**, enabling programs to take advantage of ACEN's specialized offerings
- **Boost ACEN's social media presence** to keep the conversation going on important accreditation matters

Build a Growth Model for Accredited Nursing Education Programs

- **Establish strong partnerships** in Transition to Practice
- **Continuously evaluate** the cost of accreditation for fairness to our partners
- **Create communities of practice** to enhance programs quality through shared learning and best practices
- **Develop education strategies** for peer evaluators and programs
- **Evaluate opportunities** for accreditation of nursing education globally

ACEN MISSION



ACEN supports the interests of nursing education, nursing practice, and the public by the functions of accreditation. Accreditation is a peer-reviewed, self-regulatory process by which non-governmental associations recognize educational institutions or programs that have been found to meet or exceed standards and criteria for educational quality. Accreditation also assists in the further improvement of the institutions or programs as related to resources invested, processes followed, and results achieved. The monitoring of certificate, diploma, and degree offerings is tied closely to state examination and licensing rules and to the oversight of preparation for work in the profession.

ACEN provides specialized accreditation for all levels of nursing education and transition-to-practice programs located in the United States, U.S. Territories, and internationally.

Nursing Education Accreditation:

- The ACEN is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE) as a specialized accrediting agency for nursing education programs located in the United States and its territories;
- The ACEN is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) for nursing education programs in the United States and its territories as well as for international nursing education programs;
- The ACEN accredits all types of nursing education programs including practical, diploma, associate, baccalaureate, master's, and clinical doctorate nursing programs;
- The ACEN accredits all options within a nursing education program. This includes APRN and non-APRN options as well as post-master's certificates (PMC) and DNP specialist certificates in graduate level programs;
- The ACEN accredits nursing education programs in secondary, postsecondary, and hospital-based/single-purpose governing organizations that offer certificates, diplomas, or degrees;
- The ACEN serves as a Higher Education Reauthorization Act, Title IV Gatekeeper for all types of nursing education programs offered by certain institutions that are eligible to participate in financial aid programs administered by the USDE or other federal agencies.

Transition-to-Practice (TTP) Accreditation:

- The ACEN accredits non-credit transition-to-practice programs at all levels of nursing licensure.
- The ACEN accredits non-credit transition-to-practice programs offered by academic institutions (e.g., university, college, career center) and healthcare agencies (e.g., hospitals, long-term care).

ABOUT THE REPORT TO CONSTITUENTS

The ACEN Report to Constituents is an annual publication produced by the ACEN. Its purpose is twofold:

- Describe the accreditation process and share accreditation decisions made by the ACEN Board of Commissioners during the specified year; and
- Present analysis of data collected from ACEN-accredited programs via the ACEN Annual Report.

The ACEN Report to Constituents includes a summary of data collected from multiple sources:

- Data regarding accreditation decisions rendered during the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 accreditation cycles are collected, collated, and analyzed from the ACEN's records.
- Data from the ACEN Annual Report, which is a summary of data from all programs accredited by the ACEN regarding program-specific, industry-relevant data relating to nursing program operations. It should be noted that these data are self-reported from all programs which represent a diverse group and survey questions may not have been interpreted in the same manner by all participants.
- Data from internal sources such as satisfaction data collected from programs and volunteers.

The ACEN Report to Constituents is used by the ACEN and its stakeholders to monitor components essential to the educational quality of ACEN-accredited nursing programs. Additionally, the ACEN Report to Constituents shares trended aggregated data to stakeholders.



LETTER FROM THE CEO

Kathy Chappell, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAAN
Chief Executive Officer

To all ACEN Colleagues,

I am very pleased to share this year's Report to Constituents, the ACEN's annual publication reflecting the Board of Commissioners' accreditation decisions as well as an aggregate summary of programmatic data submitted by currently accredited programs. This report reflects a large and growing ACEN community that continues to evolve to advance quality nursing education with a deep dedication to academic excellence, faculty leadership, student success, and continuing quality improvement.

In the Fall of 2023 and Spring of 2024 cycles, the ACEN Board of Commissioners granted accreditation to a total of 266 nursing programs, including 75 programs that achieved accreditation with the ACEN for the first time! Newly accredited programs represented a 22% increase from the previous annual report further demonstrating the interest in ACEN accreditation from both domestic as well as international nursing education programs.

Stakeholder satisfaction with the ACEN continues to remain very high. Candidate, newly accredited, and currently accredited programs and ACEN's large pool of Peer Evaluators report extremely high overall satisfaction with the ACEN's resources and staff services, greater than 95%! And while it is always gratifying to receive high satisfaction scores, the ACEN remains committed to continuing to improve on its ability to meet your needs. In the past year, the ACEN has expanded its internal staff to include additional resources in the areas of learning and development, accreditation services, volunteer coordinators, marketing/communications/events, and information technology and data management to improve your experience with achieving and maintaining accreditation.

A few highlights from this year's Report to Constituents include impressive licensure pass rates from ACEN-accredited programs that exceed the national mean as reported by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, high certification pass rates for graduates of master's and clinical doctorate ACEN-accredited programs, and high job-placement rates for all graduates of ACEN-accredited programs.

This year's annual report also presents data regarding the use of standardized testing including high-stakes testing, as well as the use of artificial intelligence in nursing education.

LETTER FROM THE CEO

(CONTINUED)

While the vast majority of ACEN-accredited programs use standardized testing in their programs, the ACEN reminds programs that standardized testing should be limited to the purpose for which it was intended and should not be used as a mechanism to prevent student progression or graduation. The ACEN encourages all constituents to review its position statements on high-stakes testing which can be found on the ACEN website at: [The Use of High Stakes Testing in an ACEN Accredited Program and Addendum on High-Stakes Testing 2024](#). While the ACEN Board is not currently citing programs as non-compliant in their use of high-stakes testing, it is developing a policy about high-stakes testing that will be issued for public comment within the upcoming year. The ACEN Board encourages programs to re-evaluate their current use of high-stakes testing in advance of any future policy changes.

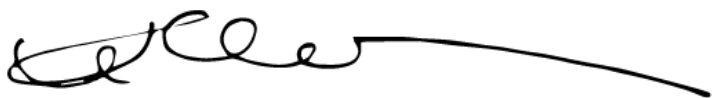
ACEN-accredited programs' use of artificial intelligence (AI) in nursing education is newly added data from previous reports. Based on data submitted, programs are more often using AI as an adjunct in the classroom and simulation settings as compared to other types of settings, and for the purpose of creating resources such as case studies.

Looking ahead in 2025, the ACEN looks forward to

- Expanding our reach through educational activities including regional workshops, e-courses related to the Standards and Criteria, and a newly designed program for leadership excellence
- Reviewing and updating policies and procedures
- Examining processes for opportunities to improve quality, effectiveness and efficiency
- Monitoring and responding to the evolving accreditation landscape

I want to extend my sincere thanks to our Peer Reviewers, Board Members, Nurse Administrators, and ACEN staff. Your collaboration, insights, and shared commitment to excellence in nursing education have made this year a meaningful one. Together, we are shaping not just nursing programs, but the future of healthcare itself.

Sincerely,



Kathy Chappell, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAAN
Chief Executive Officer
Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing

ACEN 2024 REPORT TO CONSTITUENTS

PART I - STATE OF THE ACEN



STATE OF THE ACEN

JUNE 2025

As of June 2025, the ACEN accredits 1461 nursing programs, both domestic and international. A breakdown of the program types accredited is provided in **Table 1** below.

Table 1
ACEN Program Counts by Type and Accreditation Status

Program Type	Accredited		Candidate		Eligible	
	Domestic	International	Domestic	International	Domestic	International
Practical	216	0	71	0	33	0
Diploma	27	0	1	0	0	0
Associate	858	1	74	2	41	0
Baccalaureate	218	18	50	11	23	5
Master's	86	6	17	4	7	3
Clinical Doctorate	30	0	7	0	2	0
TTP	1	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>1436</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>8</i>
Grand Total	1461		237		114	

2025 ACEN SATISFACTION SURVEY

In April 2025, the ACEN solicited constituent satisfaction via the Annual Satisfaction Survey. The survey distinguished four types of the ACEN’s constituents.

- **Currently Accredited Programs** (by Nursing Education Unit) (N=1037, n=491)
- **Newly Accredited Programs** (e.g., any program granted initial accreditation in the preceding two accreditations cycles) (N=64, n=22)
- **Candidate Programs** (programs in candidacy as of April 2025) (N=180, n=68)
- **ACEN Peer Evaluators** (N=906, n=355)

Note: N=total; n=respondents

While individual surveys did contain questions specific to the constituent type being surveyed, all constituents surveyed were asked the same core set of questions related to ACEN operations and interactions. Those core questions, and the overall satisfaction ratings (based on the aggregate of respondents indicating “Moderately Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied”) provided by the constituents is provided below.

	Accredited Programs	Peer Evaluators	Newly Accredited	Candidates
Ease of finding desired material on the ACEN website	94%	95%	95%	99%
Usefulness of materials on the ACEN website	96%	97%	93%	97%
Clarity of materials on the ACEN website	93%	96%	88%	94%
ACEN staff knowledge	97%	96%	93%	100%
Timeliness of ACEN staff response	95%	95%	93%	100%
Clarity of ACEN staff response(s)	95%	95%	93%	100%

95.46%

Percentage of Constituents Reporting Satisfaction with the ACEN 2025*

* Inclusive of “Moderately Satisfied” and “Very Satisfied (n / N)



ACEN 2024 REPORT TO CONSTITUENTS

PART II - ACCREDITATION PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

ACCREDITATION PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

FALL 2023–SPRING 2024

ACCREDITATION CYCLE OVERVIEW

ACEN peer evaluators conducted 270 reviews of 262 programs during the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 accreditation cycles. **Table 2** is an overview of all programs that received an accreditation review during the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 accreditation cycles.

The disparity between number of reviews and the number of programs reviewed is due to the 8 programs that had focused visits in addition to their regular accreditation review, which resulted in a secondary outcome decision.

Table 2

Accreditation Reviews Conducted Involving a Site Visit, by Program Type and Purpose

Fall 2023 - Spring 2024								
	P	D	A	B	M	CD	TTP	
<i>Initial Accreditation</i>	14	0	36	15	7	2	0	74
<i>Continuing Accreditation</i>	21	3	93	27	7	4	0	155
<i>Focused Visit (Secondary Outcome)</i>	1	0	7	0	0	0	0	8
<i>Follow-up Visit</i>	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	4
<i>Follow-up Report</i>	4	0	22	2	1	0	0	29
Total	42	3	160	44	15	6	0	270

*P = Practical, D = Diploma, A = Associate, B = Baccalaureate, M = Master's including Post-Master's Certificates (PMC), CD = Clinical Doctorate including Doctor of Nursing Practice Specialist Certificates (DNPSC), and TTP = Transition to Practice).

ACCREDITATION PROCESS REVIEW LEVELS



Program review is comprised of three independent levels of peer review: the site visit findings, the Evaluation Review Panel's (ERP) recommendation, and the Board of Commissioners' decision.

At the end of a site visit, peer evaluators record their findings in the Site Visit Report. The program receives a copy of the Site Visit Report and has the opportunity to provide a response with clarifications, changes, or additional information and evidence. The site visit team's report and the program's response are then made available to the peer evaluators on the ERP, who review the information available and render an accreditation recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. Finally, the site visit team's report, the program's response, and the ERP's summary containing the panel's recommendation, and any additional information provided are reviewed and considered by the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners has the sole authority to make accreditation decisions.

Types of Commission decisions are classified in the following ways:

- Initial Accreditation
- Continuing Accreditation
- Continuing Accreditation with Conditions
- Continuing Accreditation with Warning
- Continuing Accreditation for Good Cause
- Continuing Accreditation with Removal of Conditions
- Continuing Accreditation with Removal of Warning
- Continuing Accreditation with Removal of Good Cause
- Denial of Continuing Accreditation

To see full accreditation commission decision definitions via the ACEN website visit [About ACEN Commission Decisions](#)

For a detailed description of the accreditation process and policies, please consult the ACEN [Accreditation Manual](#).

ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the decisions made by the Board of Commissioners. The table is organized to illustrate accreditation decisions made per program type.

Inclusive of any required Follow-Up Reports, the ACEN Board of Commissioners' decisions for the programs visited during the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 accreditation cycles resulted in 270 accreditation decisions resulting in the programs being granted initial or continuing accreditation (Table 3).

No programs seeking initial accreditation were denied accreditation. No programs seeking continuing accreditation were denied.

Table 3
Accreditation Review Types and Outcomes by Program Type

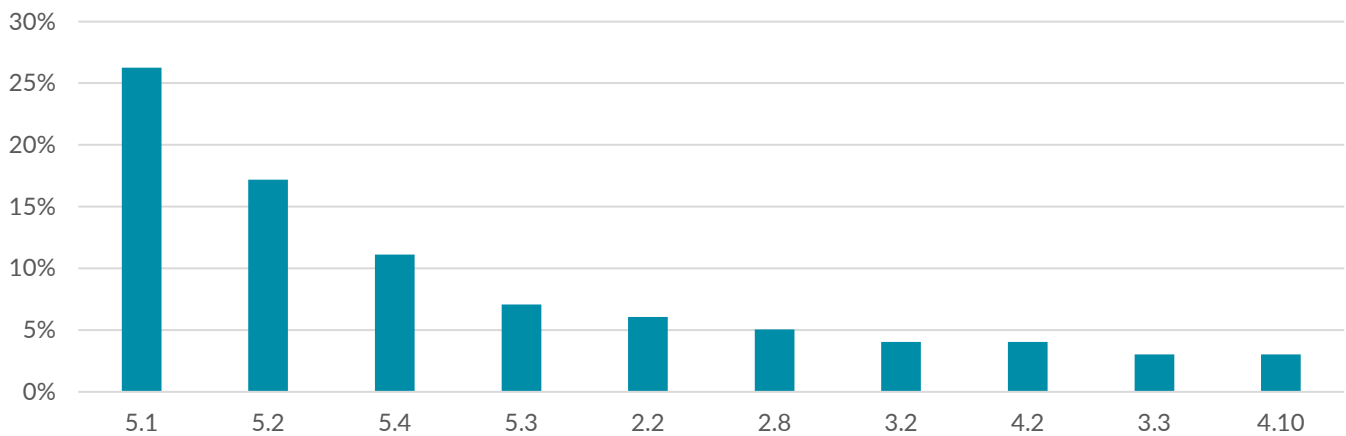
Fall 2023 - Spring 2024								
		Program Type						
		P	D	A	B	M	CD	
Review Type	Initial Accreditation	14		36	15	7	2	74
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Initial Accreditation</i>	14		36	15	7	2	74
Review Type	Continuing Accreditation	21	3	93	27	7	4	155
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Continuing Accreditation</i>	13	3	72	23	6	4	121
	<i>Continuing Accreditation with Removal of Conditions</i>			1				1
	<i>Continuing Accreditation with Conditions</i>	8		18	3	1		30
	<i>Continuing Accreditation with Warning</i>			2	1			3
Review Type	Follow-up Report	4		22	2	1		29
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Continuing Accreditation with Removal of Conditions</i>	2		19	1			22
	<i>Continuing Accreditation for Good Cause</i>	2		3	1	1		7
Review Type	Follow-Up Visit	2		2				4
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Continuing Accreditation with Removal of Conditions</i>	1		1				2
	<i>Continuing Accreditation with Removal of Good Cause</i>	1		1				2
Review Type	Focused Visit (Secondary Outcome)	1		7				8
<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Affirm Continuing Accreditation</i>			5				5
	<i>Affirm Continuing Accreditation with Removal of Conditions</i>			1				1
	<i>Affirm Continuing Accreditation with Conditions</i>	1		1				2
		42	3	160	44	15	6	270

*P = Practical, D = Diploma, A = Associate, B = Baccalaureate, M = Master's including Post-Master's Certificates (PMC), CD = Clinical Doctorate including Doctor of Nursing Practice Specialist Certificates (DNPSC), and TTP = Transition to Practice).

SUMMARY OF MOST COMMON CRITERIA IN NON-COMPLIANCE BY ACCREDITATION CYCLE

Graphs 1 and 2 provide a graphical representation of the most common criteria with which programs were identified as being in non-compliance for the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 accreditation cycles.

Graph 1
Identified Non-Compliance Criteria - Fall 2023 – Spring 2024



Graph 2
3-Year Trended - Identified Non-Compliance Criteria

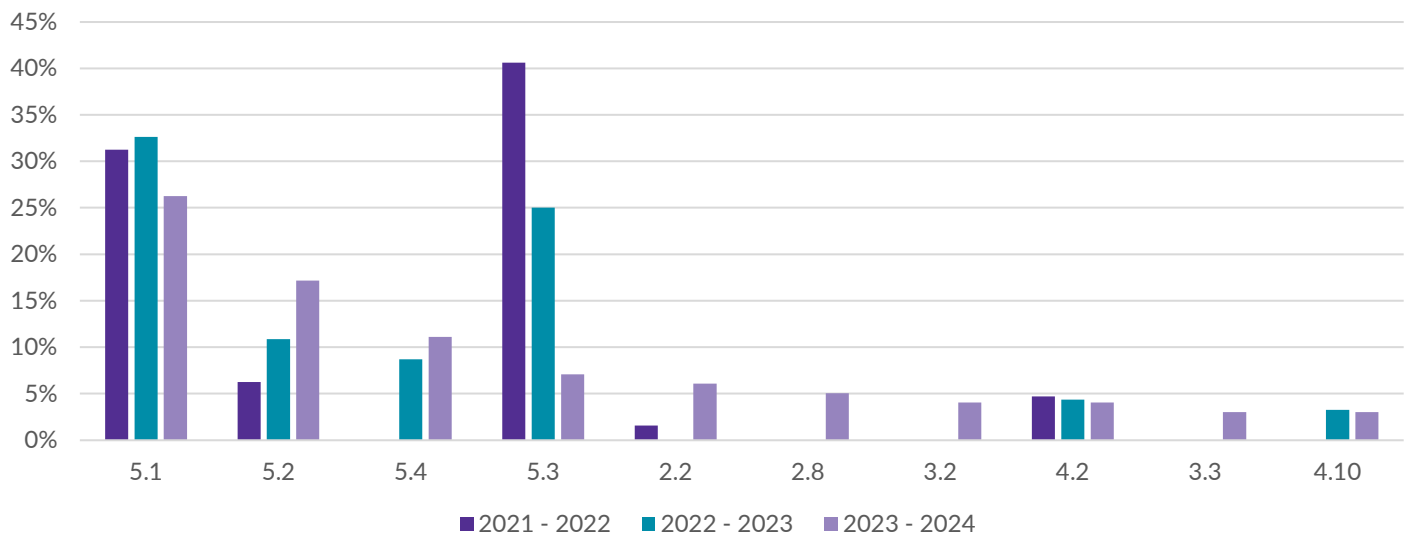


Table 4 presents data related to the Accreditation Standards with which the Board of Commissioners determined a program was in non-compliance.

Table 4
Number of Programs with Standards Identified Non-Compliant by Program Type

Fall 2023 - Spring 2024 Accreditation Cycles						
Program Type	Total Number of Programs	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4	Standard 5
P	10	1	1	0	3	9
D	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	23	1	4	4	3	18
B	5	1	2	1	1	4
M	2	0	1	0	0	1
CD	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	40	3	8	5	7	32



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The comprehensive review process may result in a decision that includes Suggestions For Improvement (SFI) for one or more criteria in each Accreditation Standard.

A Suggestion For Improvement (SFI) means that the program is in compliance with the criterion, but there is an opportunity for improvement. The identified SFIs provide guidance for the program’s faculty to assist them in their efforts to further improve the educational quality of their nursing program.

Table 5 presents the aggregated frequency of identified SFIs by standard and by program type.

You will note that the sum of programs with identified criteria exceed the actual number of programs. This is due to each standard containing multiple criteria, hence each program may have more than one criterion with identified SFIs.

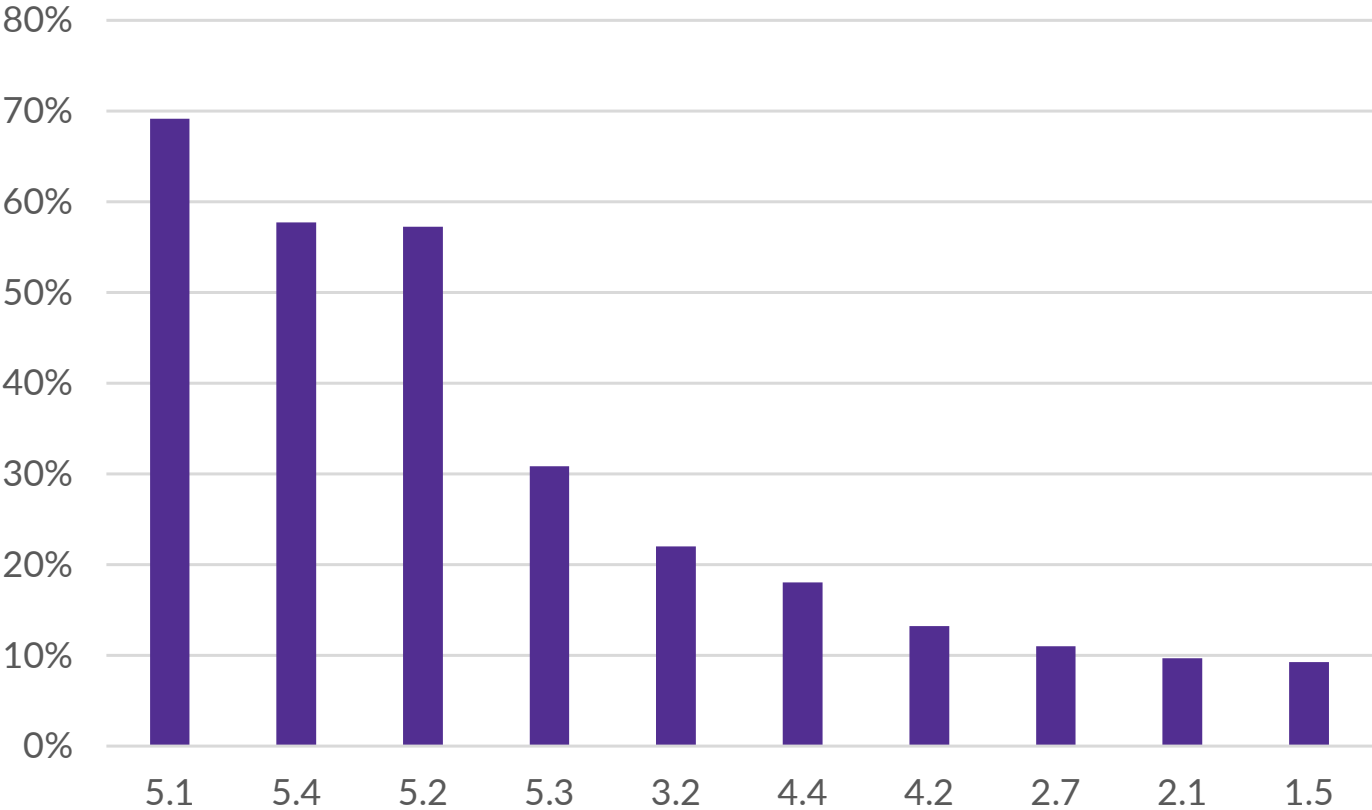
Table 5
Number of Programs with Standards Identified as a Suggestion For Improvement by Program Type

Fall 2023 - Spring 2024 Accreditation Cycles						
Program Type	Total Number of Programs	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4	Standard 5
P	35	5	10	10	13	34
D	3	1	0	3	1	2
A	130	26	34	42	56	119
B	39	8	6	13	12	38
M	14	4	4	6	7	12
CD	4	2	3	1	3	6
TOTAL	227	46	57	75	92	211



Graph 3 below provides a breakdown of the Top 10 criteria cited (by percentage) of the total number of criteria recognized as a Suggestion for Improvement during the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 accreditation cycles.

Graph 3
Criteria Identified as Suggestion For Improvement Fall 2023 - Spring 2024



ACEN 2024 REPORT TO CONSTITUENTS

PART III - PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE ACEN ANNUAL REPORT DATA



PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE ACEN ANNUAL REPORT DATA

2023–2024 REPORTING PERIOD

ANNUAL REPORT PURPOSE AND USE



Per ACEN Policy #24, all accredited nursing programs are required to submit an Annual Report. The information collected from the individual programs' Annual Reports are reviewed by ACEN staff to ensure that nursing programs continue to comply with policies and reporting requirements.

The ACEN Annual Report is used by the ACEN and stakeholders to monitor components essential to the educational quality of ACEN-accredited nursing programs.

This presentation addresses data generated from the 2023–2024 reporting period (July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024) except for enrollment and faculty information, which is based on data available on a single day (October 14, 2024). To facilitate the presentation, information in this annual report is presented in sections.

SECTION I Substantive Change: addresses substantive changes within programs.

SECTION II Program Outcomes: tracks program completion rates, licensure and/or certification examination pass rates, and graduates' job placement rates.

SECTION III Program Operations: includes data related to student enrollment in the nursing programs, faculty headcounts, faculty-to-student ratios, and nursing degree demographics, the use of standardized tests, program length, and clinical hours.

The data from the three identified areas are collated, organized, analyzed, and presented here in aggregate.

POPULATION, RETURN RATE, AND SAMPLE SIZE

The return rate for the 2023–2024 Annual Report was 100% (N=1421, n=1421), based on the number of ACEN-accredited programs as of October 14, 2024. Submission of an annual report is a requirement for maintaining ACEN accreditation.

SECTION I - SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

For the 2023–2024 reporting period, nursing education units reported 557 substantive changes. The most commonly reported change across all program types was a “Change in Nurse Administrator.” Of the remaining substantive changes reported, **Table 6** displays in aggregate the most commonly reported (e.g., the five listed account for approximately 86% of all substantive changes) changes by program type.

Table 6
Percentage of Most Commonly Reported Substantive Changes by Program Type

Fall 2023–Spring 2024										
Area of Change	Program Type						Total	% of Subchanges	% of Programs	
	P	D	A	B	M	CD				
Nurse Administrator Change	50	8	206	43	16	7	330	59%	23%	
Change in State Regulatory Agency Approval	11	2	39	7	0	0	59	11%	4%	
Program Completion Rates	11	1	20	6	0	0	38	7%	3%	
New Program Option	0	1	12	6	6	3	28	5%	2%	
Curriculum Revisions	6	4	10	5	0	0	25	4%	2%	
Total	78	16	287	67	22	10	480			
TOTAL Substantive Changes Implemented 7/1/ 2023 - 6/30/2024	557									
% of Total Substantive Changes Reported	14%	3%	52%	12%	4%	2%				

SECTION II - PROGRAM OUTCOMES

COMPLETION RATES

Completion rate is the percentage of students who graduate on time, beginning with the first day of the first nursing course, which can vary based upon a nursing program option (ACEN glossary; article in press, Teaching and Learning in Nursing, October 2025).

The recommended method for calculating program completion rate is to start with each entering cohort beginning with the first nursing course, then follow each individual student throughout the program of study until graduation. As an example, a program with 10 students on the first day of the first nursing course of a four-semester nursing program: six students from the admission cohort graduate in four semesters (100% timeframe). The applicable program completion rate would be 60% on-time graduates.

The program completion rate calculation beginning with this Annual Report cycle is based on on-time program completion.

The expected level of achievement (ELA) for program completion (e.g., 70% within four academic terms) is determined by the nursing program’s faculty and should reflect student demographics and quality education. The program must provide a rationale for the specified ELA. In setting the ELA for the program completion rate, the program may consider factors such as the historical completion rate for the program, the governing organization’s completion rate for all students, state completion rate for similar programs, group of peer programs, ACEN data, or similar. The ELA should be realistic and encourage continuous improvement but not so high as to be idealistic (and thus unachievable).

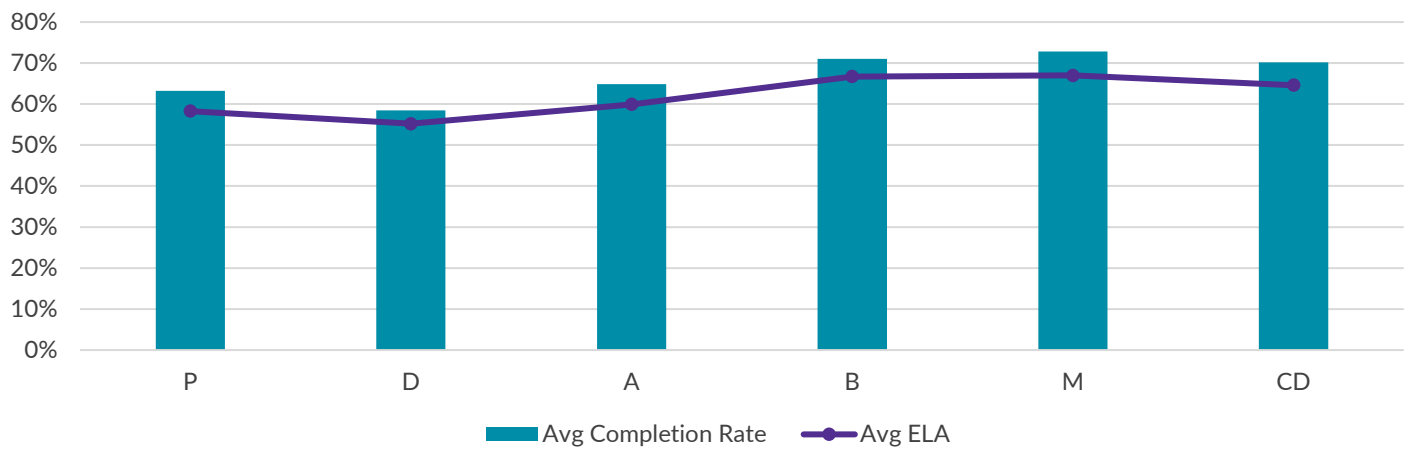
Table 7 below provides a year-over-year breakdown of average completion rate ELA and average completion rate reported by program type.

Table 7
Average Reported ELA and Completion Rate over Time by Program Type

Program Type	Averages					
	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	ELA	Completion Rate	ELA	Completion Rate	ELA	Completion Rate
P	62%	61%	59%	63%	58%	63%
D	59%	63%	56%	60%	55%	58%
A	62%	63%	61%	63%	60%	65%
B	69%	69%	66%	67%	67%	71%
M	75%	69%	68%	77%	67%	73%
CD	70%	62%	66%	67%	65%	70%

Graph 4

Average Reported Completion Rate vs Average Reported Completion Rate ELA By Program Type



LICENSURE EXAMINATION PASS RATES

A review of the data reported by the nursing programs demonstrates that the mean NCLEX-RN® and NCLEX-PN® pass rates for graduates of ACEN-accredited programs exceed the National Council of State Boards of Nursing’s (NCSBN) published national mean for all program types for 2023. The ACEN-accredited programs were asked to report their first-time NCLEX® pass rates as reported by their state regulatory agency for nursing for 2023.

Table 8 presents NCLEX-RN® and NCLEX-PN® pass rates as posted by the NCSBN for first-time, U.S.-educated candidates for years 2019–2023.

A review of the ACEN-accredited program data for NCLEX-RN® for reporting periods 2019–2023 demonstrates that the performance of graduates from ACEN-accredited programs is above the national mean for 2023.

Table 8

NCLEX® Mean Pass Rate Percentages for First-time Test-takers as Reported by the NCSBN

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	ACEN	NCSBN	ACEN	NCSBN	ACEN	NCSBN	ACEN	NCSBN	ACEN	NCSBN
P	90%	86%	87%	83%	88%	80%	91%	80%	95%	87%
D	91%	88%	89%	86%	85%	80%	89%	78%	92%	89%
A	90%	85%	88%	83%	84%	79%	86%	78%	92%	88%
B	91%	91%	87%	90%	85%	86%	86%	82%	91%	90%

Graph 5

Average Aggregate NCLEX Pass Rate For First-time Test-takers ACEN-accredited vs NCSBN National Average

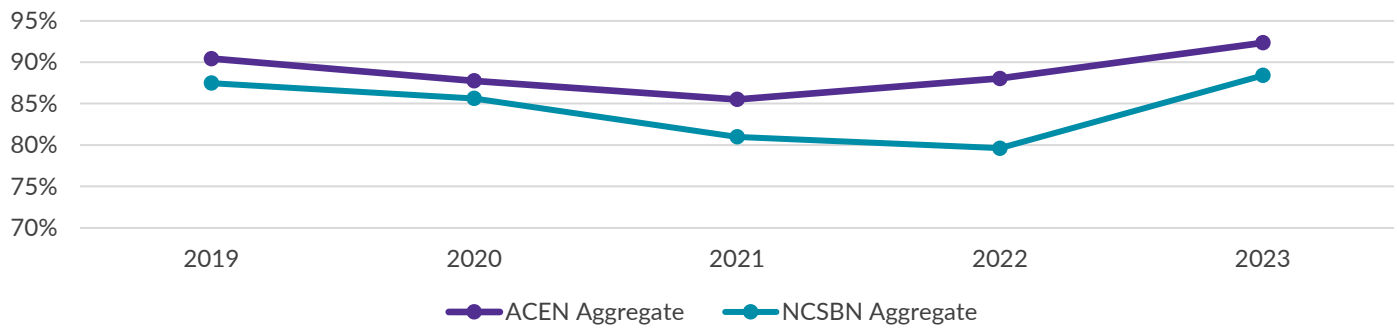


Table 9 tracks the performance of graduates from ACEN-accredited Direct-Entry Master’s programs on the NCLEX®. This data highlights program effectiveness in preparing students for licensure and entry into the nursing profession.

**Table 9
NCLEX® Mean Pass Rate Percentages for First-time Test-takers Reported by ACEN-accredited Direct-Entry Master’s Programs**

	Direct-Entry Master's				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
ACEN	90%	85%	88%	83%	86%
NCSBN	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data

For the 2023–2024 Annual Report, the raw counts of first-time NCLEX® test-takers are presented from ACEN-accredited programs in **Table 10**. Doing so allows for disaggregation of NCSBN-provided data to show ACEN-accredited programs vs. NCSBN (the national average) vs. non-ACEN-accredited programs.

**Table 10
ACEN vs Non-ACEN Accredited Pass Rates**

	ACEN			Non-ACEN			NCSBN (Total)		
	Tested	Passed	%	Tested	Passed	%	Tested	Passed	%
P	7963	7584	95%	46903	39968	85%	54866	47552	87%
D	1815	1668	92%	639	516	81%	2454	2184	89%
A	65611	60078	92%	29417	23309	79%	95028	83387	88%
B	10095	9154	91%	100064	90176	90%	110159	99330	90%

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION PASS RATES

ACEN-accredited graduate programs report the pass rate for the certification examinations taken by graduates of master's and clinical doctorate programs. As a variety of certifying agencies offer certification examinations for various nursing specialties, a comparison with any reference group is not feasible. Graduate APRN nursing programs are required to collect and analyze data related to the certification examination pass rates for all APRN program options.

Table 11 presents the data for the first time certification examination pass rates for all APRN roles as reported by ACEN-accredited programs.

Table 11

Certification Mean Pass Rate Percentages for First-time Test-takers Reported by Accredited Programs by Pass Rate

Year	APRN Program Type	
	M	CD
2019-2020	92%	94%
2020-2021	95%	96%
2021-2022	90%	95%
2022-2023	89%	94%
2023-2024	90%	96%

JOB PLACEMENT RATES

The aggregate job placement rate is the percentage of graduates (typically within one year of graduation), who are employed in a position for which a nursing program prepared them (e.g., PN, RN, FNP).

The method for calculating the job placement rate is to divide the number of graduates reporting having secured employment in a position for which the nursing program prepared them by the number of those successfully contacted. As an example, if a program had 100 graduates, successfully contacted 80 of them (80% response/contact rate), and 79 reported employment in a position for which the nursing program prepared them, the applicable job placement rate would be 98.75% (=79/80).

The expected level of achievement (ELA) for job placement rate (e.g., 95% within one year of graduation), as reflected in **Table 12**, is determined by the nursing program's faculty and should reflect program demographics and quality education. The program must provide a rationale for the specified ELA. In setting the ELA for the job placement rate, the program may consider factors such as the historical job placement rate for the program, the governing organization's job placement rate for all students, state job placement rate for similar programs, group of peer programs, ACEN data, or similar. The ELA should be realistic and encourage continuous improvement but not so high as to be idealistic (and thus unachievable).

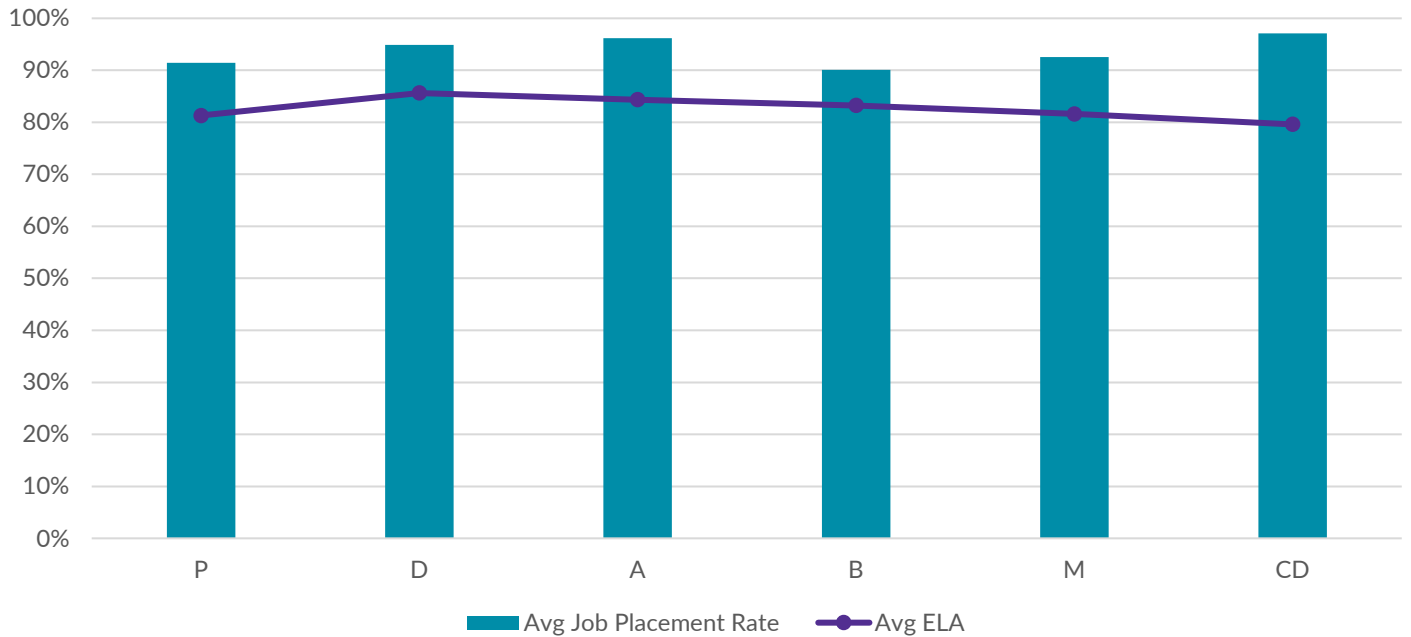
Table 12

Average Reported ELA and Job Placement Rate over Time by Program Type

Program Type	Averages					
	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	ELA	Job Placement Rate	ELA	Job Placement Rate	ELA	Job Placement Rate
P	79%	80%	79%	88%	81%	91%
D	86%	93%	85%	96%	86%	95%
A	83%	89%	84%	87%	84%	96%
B	83%	87%	83%	91%	83%	90%
M	78%	82%	79%	91%	82%	93%
CD	80%	92%	82%	98%	80%	97%

Graph 6

Average Reported Job Placement Rate vs Average Reported Job Placement ELA by Program Type



SECTION III PROGRAM OPERATIONS



STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Enrollment data were gathered on October 14, 2024 to ensure as much uniformity as possible in the data collected. **Table 13** presents enrollment statistics for ACEN-accredited programs by program type (and option where applicable).

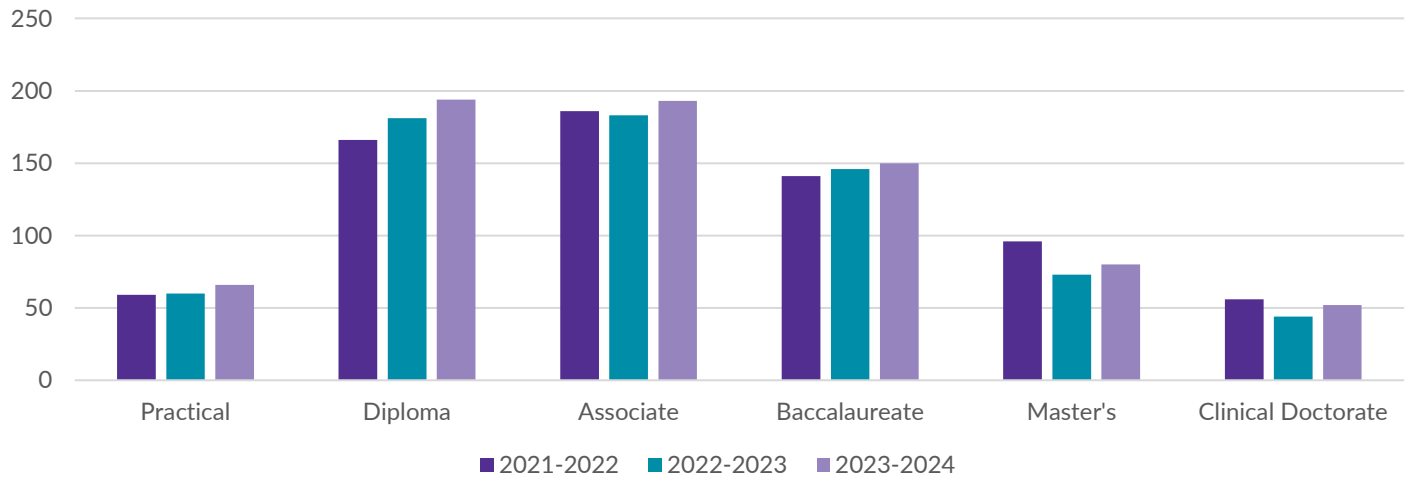
Table 13

Enrollment Statistics of ACEN-accredited Programs by Program Type

Enrollment	Average
Practical	66
Diploma	194
Associate	193
Baccalaureate	150
Pre-Licensure	218
RN-BSN	81
Master's	80
Direct Entry	105
Generic	113
PMC	21
Clinical Doctorate	52
BSN-DNP	51
MSN-DNP	71
DNPSC	34

Graph 7

3-Year Average Enrollment of ACEN-accredited Programs By Program Type



FACULTY TABLES

When collecting information for the 2024 Annual Report, the ACEN requested faculty degree demographics as of October 14, 2024. The demographics collected included total exclusive full- and part-time faculty teaching in ACEN-accredited nursing programs (not including the nurse administrator). Nursing faculty are nurses who teach and evaluate nursing students, are academically qualified, and have experience in the content areas in which they teach. Additionally, the ACEN requested information regarding the **highest degree earned** for each program’s faculty.

Table 14 shows the average exclusive full-time faculty for ACEN-accredited programs as well the distribution of nursing credentials of faculty.

Table 14

Single-Program Faculty Exclusivity and Degree Demographics for Fall 2023–Spring 2024

Program Type	Average Exclusive FT Faculty	Highest Degree			
		Associate	Baccalaureate	Masters	Doctorate
P	5	2%	21%	62%	14%
D	16	0%	6%	79%	16%
A	11	0%	6%	74%	20%
B	11	0%	9%	45%	45%
M	7	0%	13%	13%	75%
CD	5	0%	0%	1%	99%

FACULTY-TO-STUDENT RATIOS

Table 15 details the average single-program enrollment of ACEN-accredited programs (by program type) as of October 14, 2024, as well as the average full-time exclusive faculty for those programs as indicated.

Table 15

Average Full-time Faculty-to-Student Ratios by Program Type

Program Type	Average		Full-time Faculty-to-Student Ratio
	Single Program Enrollment	Full-time Exclusive	
P	66	5	1:13
D	194	16	1:12
A	193	11	1:18
B	150	11	1:13
M	80	7	1:11
CD	52	5	1:10



STANDARDIZED TESTING

Data confirms the use of standardized testing across program types. Use of standardized testing has remained essentially flat year-over-year; use remains higher than 90% for practical, diploma, and associate programs.

The ACEN Board strongly discourages the use of high-stakes testing and has issued a position statement with clarifications that can be reviewed on the ACEN website: [The Use of High Stakes Testing in an ACEN Accredited Program](#) and [Addendum on High-Stakes Testing 2024](#).

While the ACEN Board is not currently citing programs as non-compliant in their use of high-stakes testing, it is developing a policy about high-stakes testing that will be issued for public comment within the upcoming year. The ACEN Board encourages programs to re-evaluate their current use of high-stakes testing in advance of any future policy changes.

Table 16 provides an overview of the use of standardized testing across all program types. **Table 17** provides a trended look at the percentages of ACEN-accredited programs reporting using standardized testing as either progression or graduation requirements.

Table 16

Use of Standardized Testing by ACEN-accredited Program Type

	Use Standardized Testing	Use Standardized Testing as an Evaluation Method	Use Standardized Testing as a Progression or Graduation Requirement
P	94%	54%	21%
D	100%	78%	19%
A	95%	61%	15%
B	51%	34%	13%
M	36%	19%	7%
CD	20%	16%	0%

Table 17

Use Standardized Testing as a Progression or Graduation Requirement as Percentage of Program Type

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
P	22%	26%	23%	25%	21%
D	26%	20%	25%	19%	19%
A	20%	19%	19%	17%	15%
B	22%	15%	15%	14%	13%
M	16%	5%	9%	6%	7%
CD	13%	6%	14%	8%	0%

PROGRAM LENGTH

The three most common types of academic terms (semesters, quarters, and trimesters) are represented in ACEN-accredited programs. Respondents provided data regarding the length of their programs from the beginning of the nursing program (including prerequisites) to completion.

Table 18 shows the most common average program length in semesters and credit hours by program type (and option where applicable) for ACEN-accredited programs; semesters are the most common type of academic term.

Table 18

Minimum and Maximum Credit Hours Reported by ACEN-accredited Programs*

Undergraduate Program Type		
	Average Credit Hours	
Practical	42	
Diploma	74	
Associate	66	
Baccalaureate Pre-Licensure	122	
Baccalaureate Post-Licensure	120	
Graduate Program Type		
	APRN	Non-APRN
Direct Entry Master's	N/A	69
Master's	45	36
Post-Master's Certificate	28	18
BSN-to-DNP	80	70
MSN-to-DNP	55	39
DNP Specialist Certificate	49	42

*Excluding International ACEN-accredited programs

CLINICAL/PRACTICUM, SKILLS LAB, SIMULATION HOURS

To be accredited by the ACEN, a program is required to have clinical/practicum hours as defined by the ACEN and part of the curriculum. The ACEN position statement on clinical hours can be found here: <https://www.acenursing.org/position-statement/acen-position-statement-related-to-clinical-practicum-learning-experiences>

As part of the 2023–2024 ACEN Annual Report, programs were asked to provide the number of clinical/practicum hours they required as well as any skills laboratory and simulation hours (if applicable).

Table 19 illustrates the average number of clinical, skills lab, and simulation hours (respectively) required by ACEN-accredited programs based on the program options offered.

Table 19

Average Reported Clinical Hours, Skills Lab, and Simulation Requirements for ACEN-accredited Programs

Undergraduate Program Type						
	Clinical Hours		Skills Lab		Sim Lab	
Practical	424		108		45	
Diploma	793		88		65	
Associate	545		123		68	
Baccalaureate Pre-Licensure	738		118		94	
Baccalaureate Post-Licensure	129		39		44	
Graduate Program Type						
	APRN	Non-APRN	APRN	Non-APRN	APRN	Non-APRN
Direct Entry Master's	N/A	576	N/A	95	N/A	104
Master's	651	220	36	23	13	26
Post-Master's Certificate	669	192	35	10	15	4
BSN-to-DNP	1046	975	48	75	5	75
MSN-to-DNP	1007	789	42	39	0	39
DNP Specialist Certificate	1010	750	42	75	0	75



Table 20 presents a trended look at the average direct, hands-on clinical hours required by ACEN-accredited programs from 2021-2024.

Table 20
Average Clinical Hours Required for ACEN-accredited Programs

Undergraduate Program Type						
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024			
Practical	422	420	424			
Diploma	791	828	793			
Associate	528	541	545			
Baccalaureate Pre-Licensure	714	665	738			
Baccalaureate Post-Licensure	154	109	129			
Graduate Program Type						
	APRN			Non-APRN		
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Direct Entry Master's	N/A	N/A	N/A	887	684	834
Master's	614	668	651	201	156	220
Post-Master's Certificate	599	601	669	176	172	192
BSN-to-DNP	1036	1153	1046	830	889	975
MSN-to-DNP	1040	1010	1007	868	750	789
DNP Specialist Certificate	1034	1016	1010	400	500	750

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN NURSING



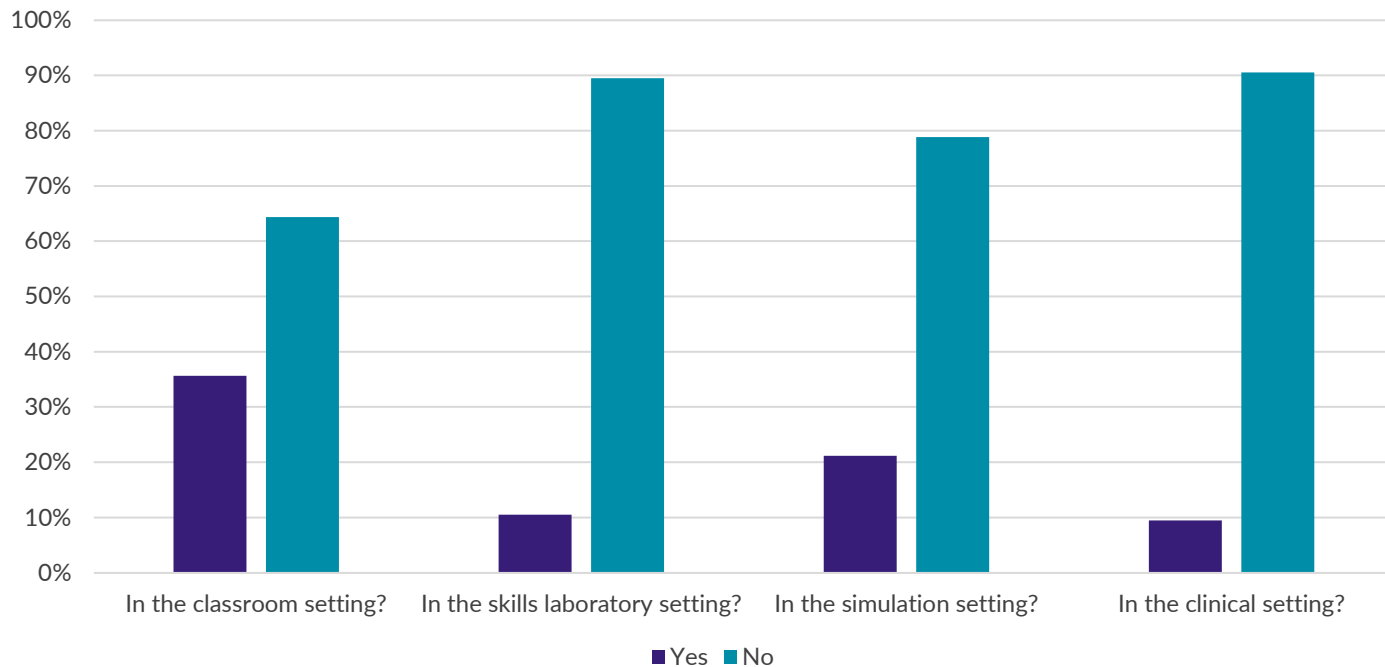
In the 2024 Annual Report, ACEN-accredited programs were asked a series of questions relating to the use of AI technology in their nursing education programs.

- What potential benefits do you see AI bringing to nursing education?
- What concerns do you have about the integration of AI in nursing education?
- Is AI being integrated into the nursing curriculum at your institution
 - In the classroom setting?
 - In the skills laboratory setting?
 - In the simulation setting?
 - In the clinical setting?
- Are there any specific AI tools or platforms that students are trained on
 - In the classroom setting?
 - In the skills laboratory setting?
 - In the simulation setting?
 - In the clinical setting?

USE OF AI

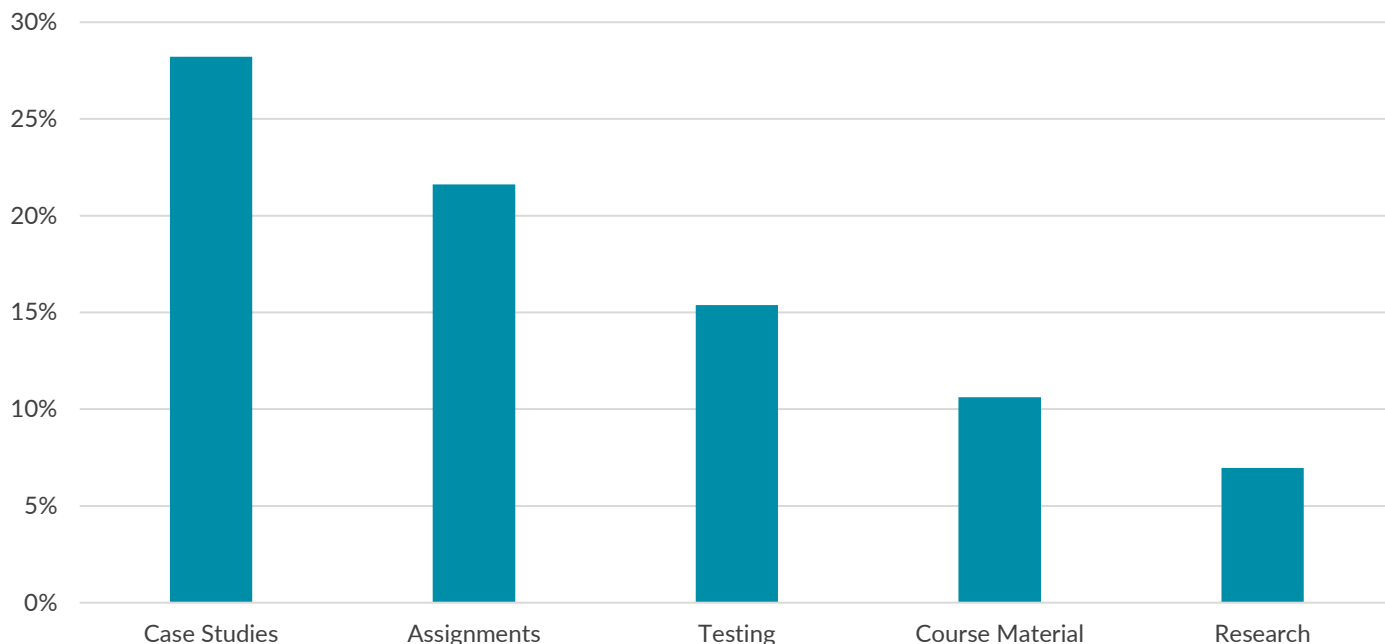
Graph 8

AI in the Curriculum: Is AI being integrated into the nursing curriculum at your institution?



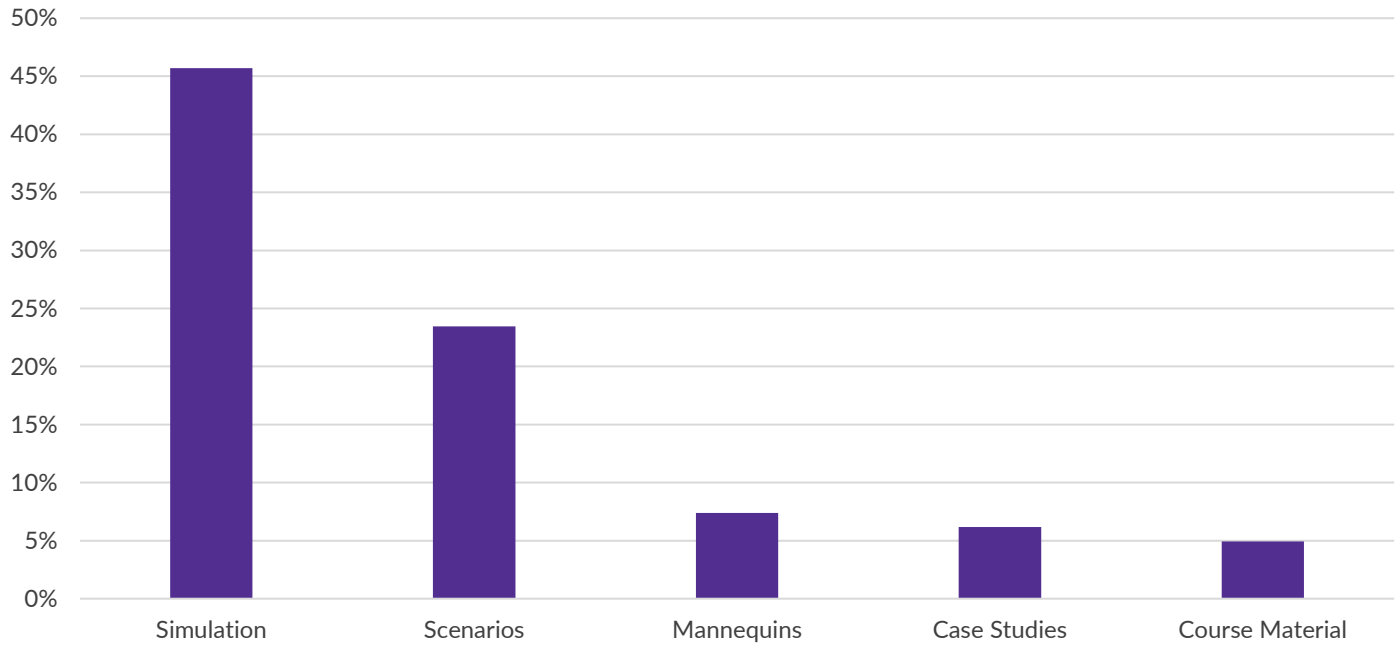
Graph 9

Use of AI in Classroom Settings; n=273



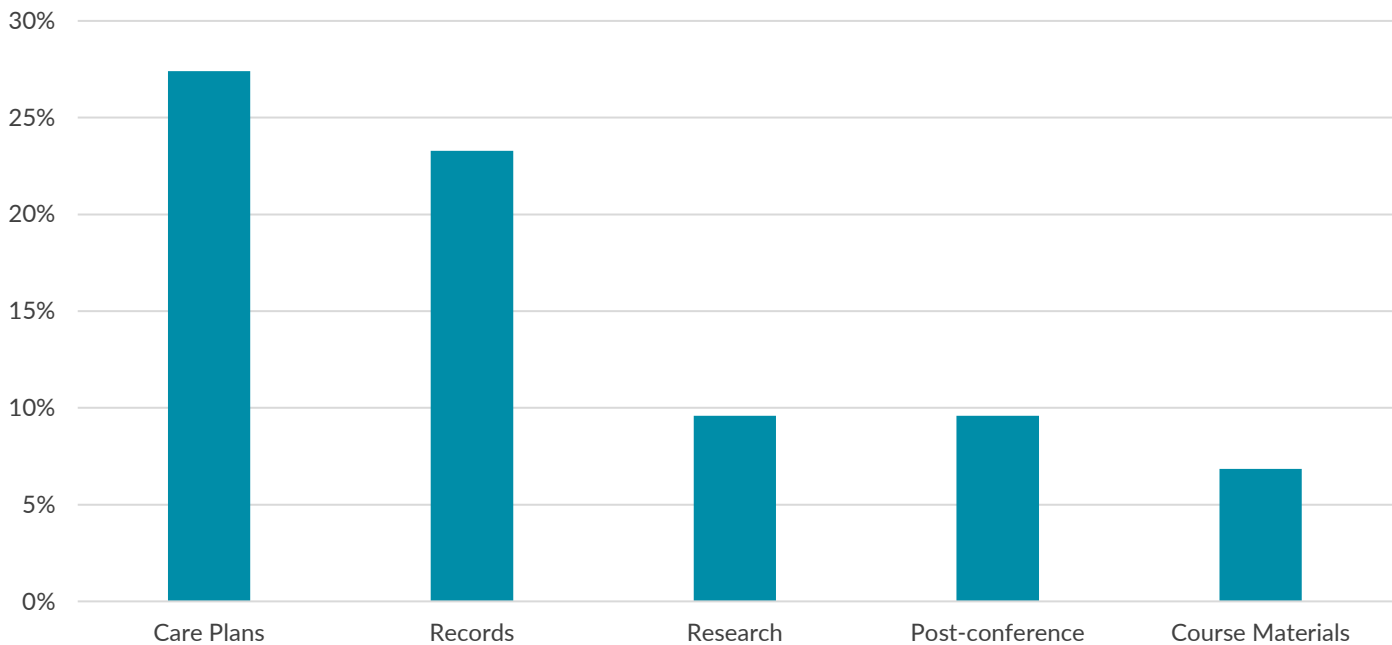
Graph 10

Use of AI in Skills Lab Settings; n=81



Graph 11

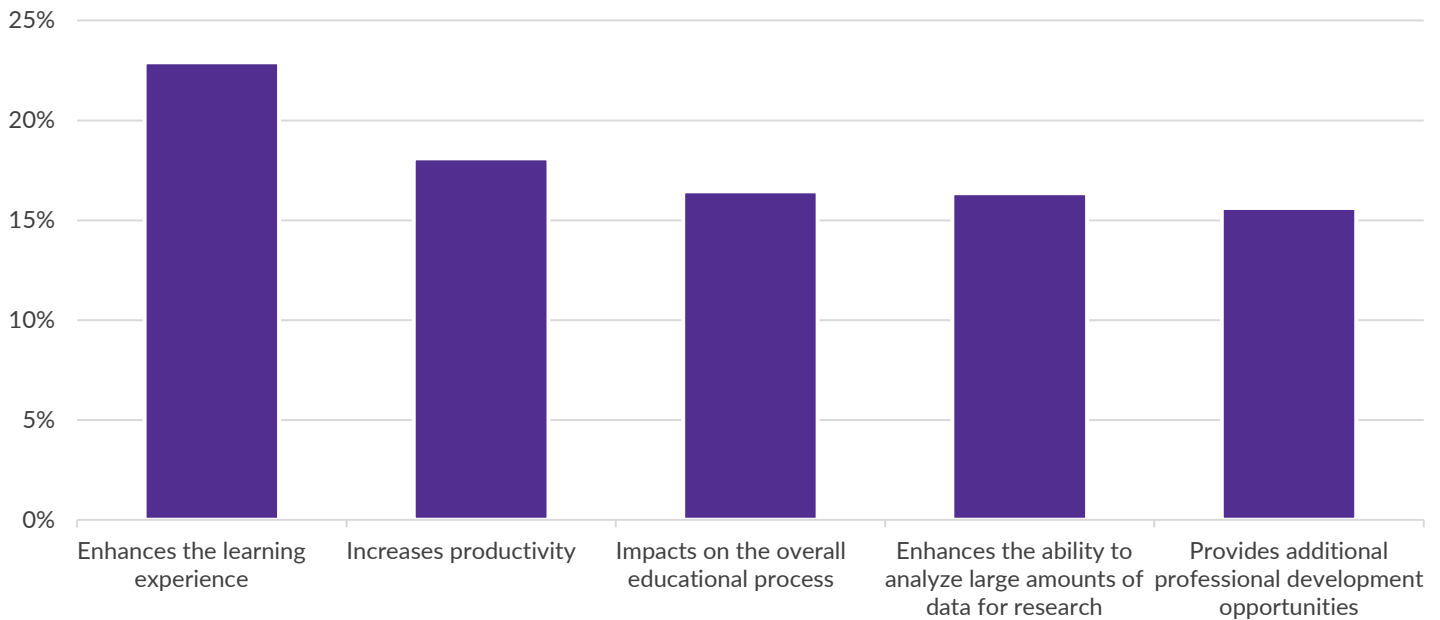
Use of AI in Clinical Settings; n=73



POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND CONCERNS

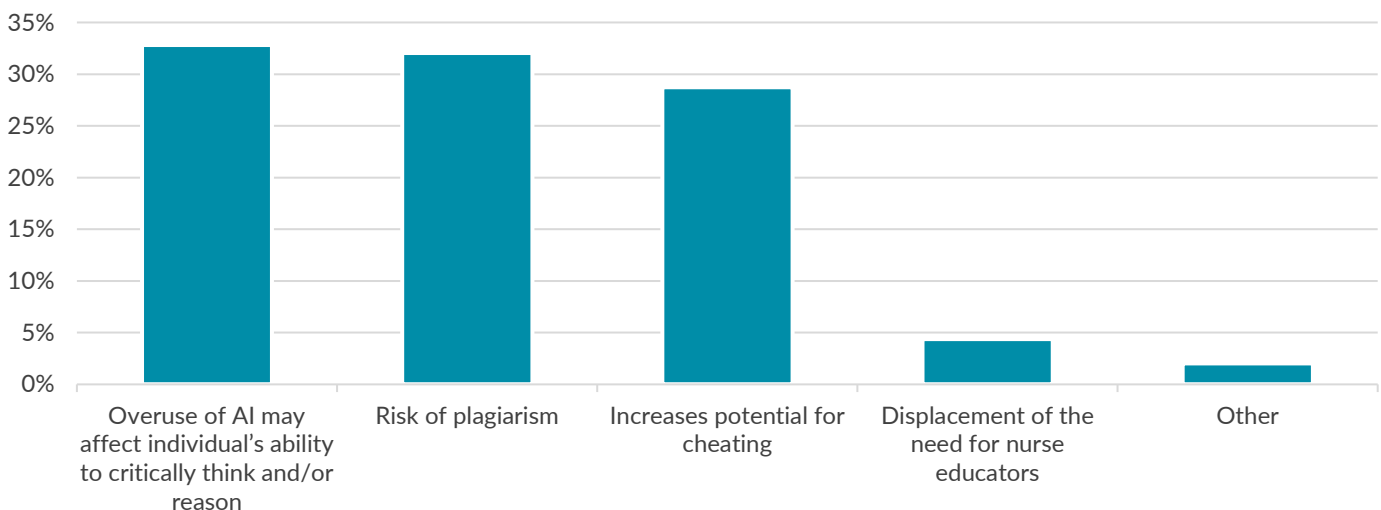
Graph 12

What potential benefits do you see AI bringing to nursing education?



Graph 13

What concerns to you have about the integration of AI in nursing education?





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