

Summary of Standards Revisions June 2017

The Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification, as part of its quality improvement initiatives, completes an ongoing review of its standards and criteria for accreditation. While not compromising the intent and rigor of the standards, the board does respond to current industry standards as well as members' and applicants' questions/suggestions. Narratives and criteria found in the application are modified occasionally to ensure the standards are clear and succinct, and continue to reflect best practices.

The following changes were approved on June 30, 2017. The revisions reflect the board's desire to clarify applicant expectations for Standards 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, and 12. Because the standards were clarified rather than substantively revised, they will become effective for all applications submitted on or after January 1, 2018.

June 30, 2017 (Effective January 1, 2018):

- **Standard 3: Organizational Autonomy**
 - For standard 3.1, instructions now include the following text: "Please align each section of the narrative with its corresponding element in the list." This revision is based on the need to facilitate reviews of this complex standard (sections a through p).
 - *Standard 3.1p now includes the following text: "ABSNC recognizes a certifying organization may share a data base with an associated member organization. If this is the case, also provide documentation to address the certifying organization's ownership of and controlled access to candidate, certificant, and SME data."*
- **Standard 4: Non-Discrimination**
 - *Standards 4.1 and 4.2 were revised to eliminate the need for a certifying organization's test vendor to provide policies and procedures. Instead, the standard requests the organization's policies plus copies of "publicly available evidence" relevant to each standard, with examples offered.*
 - Standard 4.4 was clarified to include the following: "Indicate N/A if no accommodations were requested in the previous 5 years." NO ADDITIONAL NARRATIVE IS NEEDED IN THIS CASE.
- **Standard 5: Public Member**
 - *Standard 5.2 was added as follows: "Describe qualifications of the Public Member based on criteria of this standard." To demonstrate compliance, the certifying organization should describe in the narrative how the current Public Member meets **criteria 1-4** in the standard. This is separate from the bylaws/policy document required for standard 5.1a to identify general qualifications for the Public Member role as identified by the certifying organization.*
- **Standard 6: Eligibility Criteria for Test Candidates**
 - Clarifying language was added to the **rationale** as follows: "Verification of initial certification eligibility cannot be completed solely through the use of random audit or by candidate attestation."
 - *Standards 6.5-6.7 were revised into only two standard 6.5 and 6.6 to eliminate redundancy in previous sub-requirements. To confirm the standard, **eligibility determination is required** for every APN/APRN examination candidate (i.e., active licensure, academic program completion).*
- **Standard 7: Validity**
 - Standard 7.1 was clarified to highlight specific information needed **only** if the practice analysis was conducted more than 5 years ago.
 - *For standard 7.5, please see the language above about instructions for standard 3.1.*

- **Standard 11: Test Security**
 - Language was added to the **rationale** to identify the need for security measures for electronic review or modification of examination forms.
 - *Language was added to the rationale to clarify acceptable processes for the security of practice examinations or sample items vis a vis the security of the current certification examination.*
 - For standard 11.1, please see the language above about instructions for standard 3.1.
 - *For standard 11.1b, language was added to reflect security needs related to **electronic** transfer of tests, testing materials, etc.*
 - **Sample items** were added to standard 11.2. The following statement also was added to clarify the need to maintain security of active examinations: "This includes use of retired examination items, and/or use of different item writers for practice examinations and certification examinations."
- **Standard 12: Passing Score**
 - *Language was added to the **rationale** to clarify the demographic characteristics that must be reported for passing point panel members.*
 - Revised language for standard 12.2 now identifies a 3-year time frame for accessing candidate demographic data to determine representativeness of the passing point panel. Also recognizing the volunteer nature of the passing point panel, ABSNC Directors added the following: "If a particular demographic could not be represented in the panel (e.g., member with 2-5 years' experience), discuss efforts made to be inclusive and identify a rationale for this lack of representation."
 - *Revisions to standard 12.5 clarify the roles of the test vendor (12.5a) and the certification board (12.5b) in adopting the passing score.*
- **A January 1, 2018, effective date has been selected for the revised certification standards because revisions represent clarification rather than added requirements. Applications submitted on or after January 1, 2018, should use the revised standards dated June 30, 2017.**