

Professional Licensure & Certification Exam First-time Pass Rate Improvement Plan FAMU Nursing (BSN) Program

Executive Summary

The FAMU School of Nursing (SON) offers the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Nursing Education (ACEN). While the SON experienced declining pass rates on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) in 2021, successive strategic actions recently implemented have begun to show success in reversing this trend. These strategies include both short-term and long-term actions that impact our curriculum, faculty development, and student success.

This plan provides an overview of the key activities and initiatives that are underway to improve the first-time pass rates for graduates of the School of Nursing. This summary specifically focuses on short-term strategies implemented to produce immediate positive results, and long-term strategies to promote: 1) Selection of students appropriate for the FAMU nursing program; 2) Creation and maintenance of sound pedagogical practices; 3) Early risk identification through data monitoring; 4) Just in-time intervention; and 5.) Test knowledge and skill acquisition.

Exam Pass Rates

1. Describe the short-term strategies to improve the passage rates for recently graduated and currently enrolled students expected to take the exam in the short-term. **Focus on the short-term*

Several improvement measures were implemented in the 2021-2022 academic year to address low NCLEX pass rates. Interventions were focused on new curriculum implementation, continued faculty development, hiring on more faculty and student success. Based on the 2020 – 2021 curriculum review, mapping initiative, and new curriculum development, curriculum and operational procedures enhancements were made.

Close student and course tracking has been implemented across the BSN program. Accountability metrics and requirements have been put in place. To support student content retention, level assessments and intensive content reviews have been placed at the end of semester. Students have been made partners in understanding their progress, including their individual strengths and areas of opportunity. All students now participate in an End-of-Program Living Learning Community and leave the program with “ATI Green Light” designation. Green Light designation is granted by ATI, which signifies the graduate has over a 90% probability of passing the NCLEX-RN, in the exam is taken within 6 weeks of green light attainment.

2. Describe the short-term strategies to assist students who recently failed the exam. Does the institution provide additional tutoring or financial assistance to students who fail the exam?

The SON continues to provide three-day NCLEX prep boot camps through *ICAN* to benefit all students, including those who have failed the NCLEX exam. Since Fall 2021, any student who failed the NCLEX was invited back to participate in the End-of-Program Living Learning Community and the *ICAN* boot camp. All students are permitted to have continued access to *UWorld* NCLEX prep materials and participate in NCLEX review sessions at no charge.

3. Provide the overall pass rate for the last three cohorts of graduates, including information on students who retake the exam. How many students pass the exam on the 2nd attempt, 3rd attempt, etc.? How many students fail the exam twice?

Table 1. NCLEX First-Time Pass Rates

Year	Pass Rates	Number of Examinees
2022*	74.29%	35
2021	62.30%	61
2020	66.67%	78
2019	63.4%	93

*The 2022 results are for the first and second quarter only.

As shown in Table 1, NCLEX first-time pass rates decreased from 82% in 2018 to 63.4% in 2019. There was a slight pass rate increase in to 66.67% in 2020, up from 63.40% in 2019. In 2021, the SON had no NCLEX test takers in quarters 3 and 4, due to limited testing seats related to the high COVID (Omicron) rates. The 2021 year was first and only year that only one cohort tested. The final 2021 pass rate was 62.30%. The second quarter 2020 score is 83.33%. This is an increase of 18 percentage points from the 64.71% pass rate obtained in the first quarter. The overall pass rate of 74.29% at the midpoint of the year. Currently, the repeat NCLEX attempts are now tracked by the SON. See Table 2 below.

Table 2. NCLEX Repeat Attempts

Year	NCLEX Attempt 1		NCLEX Attempt 2		NCLEX Attempt 3+		Ultimate Pass Rate
2018	68/100	68.00%	79/100	79.00%	86/100	86.00%	86%
2019	51/80	63.75%	69/80	86.25%	72/80	90%	90%
2020	45/69	65.22%	52/69	75.36%	58/69	84.06%	84.06%
2021	27/43	62.79%	35/50	70.00%			70.00% (*16 testers still to test)
2022	14/15	93.33%					93.33% (*6 testers still test)

*This table shows NCLEX Pass Rate data by the cohort's graduation year.

4. How long after graduation do students typically wait to take the exam? How many students delay taking the exam beyond a normal or typical period and why? What assistance is available who students who delay?

Students are encouraged to take the NCLEX examination within 6 months of graduation, but this is not mandated. Based on the information received from the Florida Board of Nursing, FAMU nursing graduates tend to take the NCLEX between 3 to 6 months post-graduation.

5. Are students required to pay for any services or other support strategies provided?

The SON covers costs for some of the services provided by ATI that are not covered by student fees.

6. Provide any available information on the employment outcomes of students who do not pass the exam. Do those students find employment, and if yes, what types of jobs?

The SON does not collect information on graduates who are not employed as RNs. The SON of nursing collects and reports data at 12 months post-graduation to track graduates who are employed as RNs.

Admissions

This section should address the admissions criteria and the extent to which they may or may not be sufficient for admitting qualified students to the program.

As stated in the last improvement report, the TEAS admission requirement was implemented for incoming juniors. As of Spring 2020, applicants are required to attain a TEAS score of 'proficiency' in all test categories to be considered for the nursing program. The overall performance of new admits signifies a high probability of success in the first year of the nursing program. All admitted students in 2022, spring and fall admits have met or exceeded this admission requirement.

In support of the new standards, the University established a Health Professions Recruitment Team to help strengthen the applicant pool.

Curriculum

This section should describe any recent or planned curriculum reviews relative to its alignment with the content on the exam. Please note the date of the review and key changes to be made in the short-term and in the long-term.

There are foundation guidance documents for all nursing programs in the United States. The key guidance documents for undergraduate nursing programs are The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (BSN Essentials) and QSEN Pre-licensure Competencies. Since July 2020, the curriculum has been mapped to the BSN Essentials and QSEN. There has been increased integration of clinical judgment and critical thinking, evaluation of data on high-failure rate courses, course GPAs, and ATI standardized test performance. The systematic evaluation plan (SEP) plan has been strengthened by the addition of level metrics. These metrics allow for continuous program monitoring and evaluation at the end of each semester and annually. Examples of curricular enhancements progressively implemented starting Fall 2021 are included under curriculum review and redevelopment.

Curriculum Review and Redevelopment

Pre-nursing

Programs have been developed to increase socialization to nursing education and nursing culture during the pre-nursing experience. Nursing Living Learning Community (LLC) promotes group support in preparing to enter the nursing program. The nursing (LLC), in conjunction with the pre-nursing zero-credit course, has begun to incorporate tutoring and key support for TEAS preparation. Faculty, staff, and administration engage with the LLC students to assist in socialization to the SON each semester. The students are encouraged to actively engage with the faculty and staff of the SON through participation in program decisions via standing committees.

Nursing

A comprehensive and rigorous curriculum is essential to student success. To improve student performance on the NCLEX, faculty along with SON administrators completed a comprehensive review of the curriculum. The review resulted in changes to the courses based on a curriculum mapping exercise to ensure that content and concepts were appropriately mapped to the new AACN (American Association of Colleges of Nursing) Essentials, the NCLEX test plan and QSEN. The curriculum was revised, and faculty are in the process of revising the courses to increase rigor, ensure content alignment and coverage, integrate formative assessments, and provide engaging learning activities. The curriculum revision also aimed to implement standardized course formatting to allow students to focus on learning, instead of having to acclimate to multiple course formats throughout the program. The traditional/generic program has integrated additional resources and assessments to increase the focus on NCLEX content, testing practice and skill, and QSEN practice competencies into the curriculum. SON personnel implemented experiential learning enhancements to include skills refreshers and associated assessments at the beginning of all semesters. Standardized assessments have also been integrated across all levels of the curriculum. Below are some examples of additional enhancements to the program and the time period when they were implemented:

- a. Curriculum revised to further align clinical with associated didactic sections. (Spring 2021)
- b. Experiential learning enhanced to include early semester skills and end-semester content review boot-camps (Spring 2022).
- c. A new clinical evaluation tool has been developed to improve the quality and objectivity in evaluation of clinical learning outcomes. The tool was piloted, and it is being integrated into the curriculum starting with the cohort that enter the nursing program in the Fall of 2021.
- d. NCLEX practice increased by the end of semester intensive reviews were integrated into courses. Post Level 2, 3 and 4 intensive reviews began Spring 2022.
- e. The end-of-program learning community has been added to provide additional learning support and content review in preparation for taking the NCLEX. The goal is to prepare students to take the

test within 1 –2 months of graduation. Research shows that graduated students’ performance is best within eight weeks post-graduation (Fall 2021).

f. BSN curriculum has been revised, updated with the new essentials, and reformatted to include 8-week courses, which front load theory, lab, skills prior to clinical immersion. Week 8 courses started with the entering Level 1 students only. The returning students are experiencing partial implementation of the new success strategies (Fall 2021).

g. Enhance the dosage-calculation teaching and student outcomes. ATI resources utilized, along with related assessments. Initiated in the Fall of 2021.

Student Progression

This section should describe how student progression and performance is monitored throughout the program and what strategies are in place to support students who may need additional assistance. Also include the extent to which predictive analytics is part of monitoring efforts.

The SON has implemented actions to improve monitoring of students’ performance throughout the nursing program. The goal is to achieve early and timely recognition of students with learning gaps who would benefit from timely interventions to remedy deficiencies and improve success. The main actions focused on academic policy and procedure updates, enhancing content repetition, scaffolding and remediation efforts, and improvement of the systematic placement of support resources and assessments. Some of these actions are discussed below.

Academic Policies and Procedures

The SON has established new and revised matriculation and progression policies, with a focus on improving student outcomes. The matriculation changes included the increased GPA requirements and the addition of the TEAS test as previously discussed above. Related to progression, the SON grading scale has been updated to reflect practices in use at Florida State University. Specifically, a “C” average in a nursing course is now weighted as a 75 – 79.9%, instead of 70 – 80%. This change was implemented for the new cohort of students admitted fall of 2020. Students must pass all courses with a 75% examination average.

We have benchmarked content mastery exams (Diagnostics) and develop policies that mandate individualized remediation plans with systems to monitor completion of the student remediation plans prior to completion of final retakes. We closely track experiential learning time and mandatory make-ups for missed experiential learning hours for clinical and laboratory sessions to ensure that students get the minimum required hours of skills practice and patient care needed to reinforce theory and develop skill competencies. Failure to meet experiential learning requirements can lead to course failure and mandatory course repeats. Students are still permitted to repeat only two nursing courses in the program.

Repetition, Scaffolding & Remediation

Student grades are closely monitored. Any student receiving a grade of 75% or less on any assessment is referred to mandatory success coaching by the faculty. The faculty communicate the specific needs of the students to the success coaches and make referrals to academic advisors when a pattern of sub-standard performance is noted. The advisors can assess social and emotional needs and make referrals as needed.

While students are progressing through the nursing program, content mastery exams (Diagnostics) will be given each semester. These mastery examinations highlight NCLEX content and provide information on students’ preparedness for the summative examination, and the Comprehensive Predictor. The program directors and ATI Faculty Champions now meet with each student once per semester and review the student’s performance on content mastery examination. Special care is taken to highlight students’ areas of strength and areas of opportunity. Each student is guided to resources to help them improve in areas of noted opportunity for improvement. Students who do not reach level 2 proficiency on the content mastery (Diagnostic) examinations are provided intrusive advisement and individualized remediation plans. The intensive remediation curriculum covers multiple courses and is created for high-risk students.

SON continues to have senior students take the Comprehensive Predictor. Prior to taking the Comprehensive Predictor, a culminating end of program review that includes course content and NCLEX preparation is provided to students. The comprehensive predictor process was outlined in the previous improvement plan. All students now participate in an End-of-Program Living Learning Community and leave the program with “ATI Green Light” designation. Green Light designation is granted by ATI, which signifies the graduate has over a 90% probability of passing the NCLEX-RN, in the exam is taken within 6 weeks of green light attainment.

Faculty Support & Development

This section should describe what support and development are available to the faculty to ensure they are able to adequately support students in preparing for the exam.

Faculty receive regular support from the University Center for Teaching and Learning. This Center offers regular trainings on teaching and learning strategies. The faculty have been provided nursing-specific training by consultants on NCLEX mapping, NCLEX style item writing and nursing education in preparation to become certified nurse educators.

The SON is providing faculty and staff with development focused on research and teaching and learning strategies. Faculty have engaged in specially designed development training to increase their knowledge and competency in pedagogical teaching and learning best practices. During 2021 Spring and Summer semesters, the faculty have had additional training on clinical judgement, and QSEN integration into the curriculum. This Fall semester, the faculty were provided refresher training on dimensional analysis. There have been other training courses on NCLEX Next Generation and integration of QSEN through creative teaching strategies.

Accreditation/Regulatory Update

This section should address any recent decisions, findings, actions from the program’s accreditor and/or licensing board and how the institution is addressing those issues.

Due to low NCLEX pass rates (Criterion 6.2), our accreditor, Accreditation Commission for Nursing Education (ACEN), has granted the program continuing accreditation with conditions until September 2022. The SON was granted extended “accreditation with conditions” status until 2022 for Good Cause. The ACEN Board of Commissioners is expected to render a decision on the request during its upcoming September 2022 meeting.

The Florida Board of Nursing (FL BON) regulates the Traditional BSN program. In July 2021, the FL BON, placed the program on probation based on low first-time NCLEX Pass Rates for the 2019 and 2020 calendar years. FAMU SON has been placed on probation for two years. The program will be reevaluated again in January 2023.

Additional Information (optional)

This section is optional and may be used to describe any other initiatives designed to improve exam pass rates that do not align with any of the previous section.

In an effort to strengthen experiential learning activities to improve theory application and clinical judgement, the SON is in the process of building a state-of-the-art simulation center and student success center. The construction projects are expected to be completed in the Fall of 2022. The SON has been provided with funds to support additional faculty lines. The SON will be hiring faculty to support the traditional BSN program.



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School of Nursing Response to BOG Follow-up Questions:

1. What efforts have taken place to understand why students are not passing the NCLEX?

Several initiatives have been implemented to identify root causes for the program's NCLEX pass rate outcomes. As noted in the improvement plan that was submitted in 2020, curriculum reviews were conducted by expert consultants during the 2019-2020 academic year to strengthen curriculum quality, content, and delivery. Based on the findings the curriculum was mapped and revised; the new curriculum rolled out in the Fall of 2021. Key components of the enhanced curriculum are the strategic integration of NCLEX review boot camps and better alignment with the NCLEX text plan.

Upon her arrival in July 2020, Dean Shelley Johnson initiated a comprehensive review of the program that identified several areas requiring improvement. Over the past two years the program has 1) enhanced student recruitment and admissions; 2) expanded academic support services; 3) incorporated diagnostic assessments and early-alert identification systems; 4) constructed a new state-of-the-art simulations laboratory to enhance clinical preparation; 5) enhanced faculty development; and 6) established 8 new faculty positions.

2. Regarding the data submitted in the excel files, is it possible to remove the student in the nursing cohort with \$150,000 in loans? We would like to see the totals without this student included if possible and the loan amount of the student footnoted on the sheet.

Yes, this will be completed with the assistance of Institutional Effectiveness.

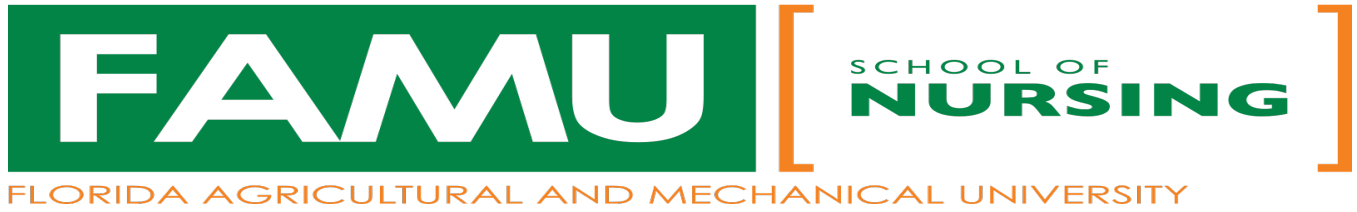
3. Is FAMU planning to submit anything to ACEN and/or the Board of Nursing to address the exam pass rate?

A two-year plan was submitted to the Florida Board of Nursing in July of 2021. We will be reviewed by the Florida Board of Nursing in January of 2023. We will submit an update to the Board this Fall.

We submitted a follow-up report to ACEN and held an ACEN on-site visit in April 2022. The SON met all accreditation standards except for Criterion 6.2. Criterion 6.2 required that the first-time pass rate be 80% or higher. The ACEN Board of Commissioners is expected to render a decision on the request during its upcoming September 2022 meeting. We continue to work towards meeting Criterion 6.2 this calendar year.

4. Has the School of Nursing reached out and worked with any of other SUS nursing deans in effort to improve passage rate?

This information was reported in the previous improvement plan. The School of Nursing administrative team continues to work collaboratively with Florida State University and University of South Florida leadership and faculty. In collaborative meetings evidence-based strategies for improving student outcomes are shared. The Dean of Nursing also continues to collaborate with the other SUS deans in the Florida Association of Colleges of Nursing (FACN) group. FACN has been helpful in providing guidance and support to the SON.



The SON continues to meet with and receive support from the SON advisory board. “The board is comprised of nurses, program graduates, local health systems’ chief nursing officers, owners of Florida healthcare organizations and representation from other successful nursing programs in the United States (e.g. Case Western Reserve University). The board will be helpful in providing guidance on current issues and assisting the SON as it prepares its graduates for future educational, and workforce needs.”