



STANDARDS FOR EMERGENCY  
NURSE PRACTITIONER ACADEMIC  
PROGRAM VALIDATION



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## AAENP MISSION

The American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners promotes high quality, evidence-based practice for nurse practitioners providing emergency care for patients of all ages and acuities in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team.

More specifically, the Academy seeks to:

- Establish guidelines for quality and safety emergency health care
- Encourage continuing clinical education of emergency nurse practitioners
- Support training and education in emergency care
- Facilitate research in emergency care
- Collaborate with professional health organizations and academic institutions

## AAENP VISION

We are dedicated to sustained partnerships with all emergency care providers, academic and healthcare institutions. We will use our expertise in research, curricular development, nursing regulation, and clinical practice to offer patients across the life span the highest quality care at all acuity levels.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## DEFINITION OF VALIDATION

*Validation* is the official recognition on the AAENP website of an emergency nurse practitioner (ENP) academic program which meets the standards established by the AAENP Validation Committee for the inclusion of appropriate specialty content.

## VALIDATION COMMITTEE

The Validation Committee is a standing committee of AAENP that serves as the primary review body for ENP programs applying for initial or continuing validation. Panels of evaluators, who may or may not be members of the Validation Committee, are enlisted to complete the review process. Evaluators are selected and approved by the members of the Validation Committee.

According to the *Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs*, “In addition to preparation for national certification in the role and at least one population-focused area of practice, programs may prepare students to practice in a specialty or more limited area of practice. Preparation in a specialty ***must have additional didactic and clinical hours beyond those required for preparing graduates in the NP role and one population-focused area*** [emphasis added]” (National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education, 2016). The purpose of the AAENP Validation Committee is to evaluate the curriculum that is in addition to the population-foci and that prepares the nurse practitioner for the emergency nurse practitioner specialty. As the specialty organization for ENPs, validation of ENP academic programs by AAENP is required to meet the education criteria for the AANPCB certification exam.

AAENP is not an accrediting agency and does not evaluate nursing degree programs.

While the Validation Committee coordinates the program review process, ENP academic and clinical experts from across the country complete a double-blinded review of ENP programs.

## AAENP ACADEMIC PROGRAM EVALUATORS

AAENP relies on a large network of national ENP experts to evaluate ENP academic programs.

The evaluation team will consist of five reviewers as follows:

- 2 ENPs Practicing in an Emergency Care Setting, 1 of which is a clinical preceptor;
  - The ENP practicing in an emergency care setting serving on the review team either, a) works full-time in emergency care as an ENP and has at least 5 years of full-time experience in the role; or b) has worked full-time as an ENP for a minimum of 10 years and maintains currency in practice by providing emergency care at least 500 hours per year. The practicing ENP has general knowledge about advanced practice nursing and specialty knowledge in advanced emergency care. The ENP holds current certification as an ENP by AANP-CB.
- 2 ENP Academic Program Director/Coordinator/Faculty;
  - The ENP faculty member who serves on the review team has expert proficiency in advanced emergency nursing and has demonstrated excellence in nurse

practitioner specialty education and program development. He or she assists the review team to understand the nature of specialty nurse practitioner education and the importance of preparing safe and effective ENPs. The ENP academic program director/coordinator/faculty assist the committee in evaluating the ENP academic curricula and faculty roles and qualifications. The ENP director/coordinator/faculty will hold current ENP certification as an ENP by AANP-CB.

- 1 Nurse Practitioner with Academic Program Design Experience (is not required to be an ENP or work in emergency care);
  - The Nurse Practitioner with Academic Program Design Experience who serves on the review team has expert proficiency in one or more areas of advanced nursing practice and has expert knowledge of nursing education and program design. He or she is responsible for assisting the review team to recognize and understand the application of sound pedagogy within the academic program design. Academic program design experts assist the review committee in evaluating ENP academic curricula, evaluative processes and faculty roles and qualifications.

## PROCEDURAL OVERVIEW

The AAENP Validation Committee has developed a systematic process to assess and evaluate ENP programs to determine alignment with published ENP educational standards. The following documents will inform the process:

1. American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (2018). *Practice Standards for the Emergency Nurse Practitioner Specialty*. Retrieved from [https://www.aaenp-natl.org/assets/docs/practice\\_standards\\_for\\_the\\_emergency\\_nurse\\_practitioner.pdf](https://www.aaenp-natl.org/assets/docs/practice_standards_for_the_emergency_nurse_practitioner.pdf)
2. American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (2016). *Scope and Standards for Emergency Nurse Practitioner Practice*. Retrieved from [https://www.aaenp-natl.org/assets/docs/aaenp\\_scope\\_and\\_standards.pdf](https://www.aaenp-natl.org/assets/docs/aaenp_scope_and_standards.pdf)
3. American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board. (2018). *Emergency Nurse Practitioner Specialty Certification: ENP Certification Handbook*. <https://www.aanpcert.org/resource/documents/Emergency%20NP%20Handbook.pdf>
4. American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board. (no date). Emergency care skills and procedures. [https://www.aanpcert.org/resource/documents/Emergency%20care%20Procedures%20%20Skills%20list%20\(004\).pdf](https://www.aanpcert.org/resource/documents/Emergency%20care%20Procedures%20%20Skills%20list%20(004).pdf)

A master's degree, post-graduate certificate, or Doctor of Nursing Practice ENP program may request review by the Validation Committee. The review process is voluntary and is initiated by the institution.

The validation procedure consists of the following steps:

1. The program submits an Intent for Validation Review letter using the electronic portal available on the AAENP website. When the letter of intent is received, the Validation Committee will begin recruiting reviewers for the proposed program.

2. The program submits a complete application (Appendix A) to AAENP requesting a formal review of the ENP program within 6 months of submitting the Intent for Validation Review letter.
  - a. It is highly encouraged that the program completes a self-study to assess for deficiencies prior to requesting a formal review. Further details for this process are outlined in the materials provided by AAENP upon submission of the Intent for Validation Review.
  - b. It is the University's responsibility to ensure that all identifying information has been removed from the required documentation (with the exception of the director's CV and evidence of certification). AAENP will not review the material for identifying information prior to distribution to reviewers.
3. Once the application is received, the committee chairperson will perform an initial review of the program information to ensure a complete application has been received. At this point, the timeline for the review process begins (see Figure 1).
4. The committee chairperson will review the ENP program director's CV and evidence of certification since this information cannot be de-identified for the reviewers.
5. An evaluation team is appointed by the Validation Committee chairperson to assess the program and determine program alignment with ENP academic program standards. Each evaluator will complete a report for the Validation Committee within 28 days.
6. In review of the evaluators' reports, the Validation Committee will determine validation status of the program (see outcomes below).
7. The Validation Committee chairperson will issue a formal decision letter to the university.

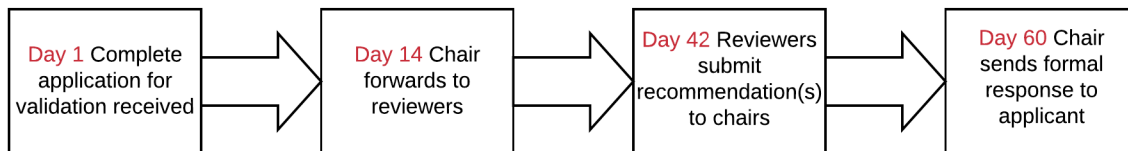


Figure 1. Timeline for Validation review process.

In order to remain a validated program, the evaluation process must be completed every 5 years.

## VALIDATION CATEGORIES

### Validation

Validation is the recognition status given by the AAENP Validation Committee to an ENP program that meets the standards set by AAENP.

### Validation Pending Minor Revisions

Validation pending minor revisions is assigned to applications that require few or minor revisions to the proposed program. Revised applications are not sent back to the reviewers. The

Validation Committee chairperson will review the revised application to ensure that the program has corrected all of the deficiencies that were identified in the initial review. Failure to correct all deficiencies will result in validation being denied.

### Validation Pending Major Revisions

Validation pending major revisions is assigned to applications that require major revisions. Revised applications will be sent back to the reviewers to ensure that the program has corrected all of the deficiencies that were identified in the initial review. Failure to correct all deficiencies will result in validation being denied.

### Validation Denied

Validation is denied by AAENP when an ENP program seeking validation does not meet the standards set by AAENP after one revision attempt. Programs that are denied validation must submit another application and pay another application fee to begin the review process again.

## VALIDATION TERM

The program's validation remains valid for five years from the date of the formal decision letter issued by the Validation Committee chairperson. Validation automatically lapses at the conclusion of the five years. AAENP recommends that programs submit an application for continued validation at least six months prior to the program's validation expiration date. For a review of continued validation by AAENP, the program must submit an application for review. AAENP does not grant extensions of validation terms.

The Validation Committee may elect to modify a program's validation status when a program has undergone a significant change, when major deterioration in the ENP program has occurred, or when other issues surrounding compliance with AAENP standards arise.

## PROGRAM CHANGE NOTIFICATION

Validated ENP programs are expected to maintain compliance with the current AAENP standards for program evaluation and maintenance for validation, including advising the AAENP Validation Committee in the event of a change affecting the program. ENP programs that are validated by AAENP are required to notify the AAENP Validation Committee of any change(s) impacting the ENP program. Changes considered to be significant in nature are closely aligned with what constitutes a substantive change for nursing program accrediting bodies, such as the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (2019). For the purposes of ENP validation, significant changes include, but are not limited to:

- change in ownership or oversight of the institution or program, including acquisition by or merger with another institution;
- a significant reduction in resources of the ENP program such that previously described learning and/or assessment methods are no longer utilized and/or available;



- change in status with a state board of nursing, accrediting or regulatory body, including cases in which the ENP program is placed on warning or probationary status;
- change (including addition, suspension, or closing) in ENP-related degree offerings or program options;
- the addition of courses that represent a significant change in method or location of delivery from those offered when AAENP last evaluated the program;
- change in the ENP Program Director or significant change of faculty composition & size;
- major curricular revisions; and
- ENP-C certification pass rates for all test takers (first time and repeat) less than 80% over a 3-year period.

(Adapted from Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education Procedures for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs Amended: May 31, 2019)

The letter describing the significant change must be submitted to the AAENP Validation Committee using the electronic portal available on the AAENP website no earlier than 90 days prior to change implementation or occurrence, but no later than 90 days after implementation or occurrence of the change. Details for content to be addressed in the letter, including the anticipated implications of the change, are included on the letter template.

Once received, the significant change report is reviewed by the AAENP Validation Committee. Upon review of the report, the committee may act to approve the change or may request additional information. Changes in Program leadership or other program details reflected on the AAENP website will be updated following receipt of the change notification.

Continued program validation is contingent upon the ENP Program Director notifying the AAENP Validation Committee of substantive changes in a timely manner. Failure to do so within the timeframe noted above may result in loss of program validation.

## VALIDATION FEES

AAENP is committed to conducting an evaluation and validation process that is efficient and cost-effective. The fee schedule is posted on the AAENP website and in this handbook. Fees paid to AAENP are nonrefundable.

### Application Fee

**\$2000**

Programs seeking initial validation by AAENP are required to pay an application fee. A \$1000 deposit is required for submission of a letter of intent. When the deposit is received, the applying university will have access to the AAENP Standards for Emergency Nurse Practitioner Academic Program Validation. The remainder of the fee is to be paid when the program submits its application for validation. Each program being evaluated requires a separate fee and application.

### Validation Renewal Fee **\$1500**

Programs seeking continuing validation before the 5-year anniversary of the program's initial validation are required to pay a validation renewal fee and submit an application. The fee is to be paid when the program submits its application for validation renewal.

### Application Fee Following Withdrawal of Validation **\$2000**

Institutions seeking validation of an ENP program that has had validation withdrawn will follow the same procedures outlined earlier in this handbook for initial evaluation.

### Fee for Applications Requiring Major Revisions **\$1000**

Applications that are approved pending minor revisions are not sent back to the reviewers and the institution will not be required to pay any additional fees. A full review among reviewers is required for applications that need major revisions. To cover the additional expenses of reviewers, the applying institution will be required to pay an additional \$1000.

AAENP reserves the right, at its discretion, to modify current fees and develop new fees for validation as necessary and without further notice.

## REFERENCES

American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners (2018). *Practice Standards for the Emergency Nurse Practitioner Specialty*. Retrieved from [https://www.aaenp-natl.org/assets/docs/practice\\_standards\\_for\\_the\\_emergency\\_nurse\\_practitioner.pdf](https://www.aaenp-natl.org/assets/docs/practice_standards_for_the_emergency_nurse_practitioner.pdf)

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**APPENDIX A.** Recommended Supporting Documentation to Submit for Validation of Academic Emergency Nurse Practitioner Programs

Supporting Documentation	
Curricula vitae of the ENP program director/coordinator who will provide direct oversight of the program	
Proof of national certification or eligibility for certification by AANP-CB as an ENP for the ENP program director/coordinator and all faculty who will be teaching in the ENP courses	
A copy of admission materials with admission criteria for the ENP program clearly highlighted	
The program of study for the graduate and/or post-graduate (full and part-time) including didactic and clinical courses, course sequence, number of credit hours, number of clinical hours per course, as appropriate	
A description of types of clinical experiences, including patient populations, types of practices, or settings each student is expected to receive. Clinical hours in each type of practice setting must be clear.	
An overview of the number of required clinical/preceptor hours. For dual certification and combined programs, demonstration of areas of overlap among clinical hours must be made clear.	
Course syllabi for each course that includes ENP content in a topical outline format	
A comprehensive list of skills and details of required simulation experiences that clearly articulates the process for evaluation of student attainment of competency	
Written statement that will be provided to students identifying each role, population-focused, and specialty certification for which they will be eligible to apply upon successful completion of the program	
Any additional evidence that demonstrates the ENP program's ability to prepare graduates to meet the educational eligibility requirements for the ENP certification exam	

*Note: To ensure a blind review process, it is the University's responsibility to remove all identifying information from the required documentation (with the exception of the director's CV and evidence of certification). AAENP will not review the material for identifying information prior to distribution to reviewers.*