



NATIONAL NURSE PRACTITIONER RESIDENCY & FELLOWSHIP TRAINING CONSORTIUM

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ACCREDITATION COMMISSION RULES OF GOVERNANCE AND INTEGRITY OF ACCREDITATION ACTIVITIES

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Purpose:

The Accreditation Commission of the National Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Training Consortium (NNPRFTC) serves as the accrediting body for NNPRFTC. The Commission's sole role and responsibility is to provide accreditation to eligible programs that meet the accreditation standards.

The purpose of this document is to be transparent about the appointment, composition, and governance of the Accreditation Commission of the National Nurse Practitioner Residency and Fellowship Training Consortium (NNPRFTC). The Accreditation Commission functions independently of the NNPRFTC Board of Directors with regard to accreditation activities and decisions. However, the Accreditation Commission keeps the NNPRFTC Board of Directors fully informed on all such matters in an upcoming Board meeting.

Governance:

NNPRFTC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides programmatic accreditation to NP and NP/PA postgraduate training programs; promotes excellence in such training by providing a model of high performance, rigorous training based on our accreditation standards, and supports related education and advocacy efforts. Accreditation is a voluntary activity that such postgraduate training programs opt to pursue. NNPRFTC's Board of Directors ("Board") consists of representatives of various stakeholder groups, including recognized leaders in healthcare, professionals from other nonprofit organizations, members of the public whose expertise is relevant to good practice in the nonprofit sector, employers, educators, and healthcare practitioners and individuals with experience as postgraduate residency program directors. Board members serve a three-year, renewable (once) term. The Board conducts quarterly meetings, an annual meeting, and special meetings as necessary. There are three standing Board committees: the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee and the Membership Committee. Ad hoc committees are appointed as needed.

These Rules pertain only to the Accreditation Commission and accreditation reviews.

Accreditation Commission:

Composition: The Accreditation Commission is a division of NNPRFTC and consists of (A) no more than four members of the Board, including the Executive Director, who are non-voting members with ex officio appointments who are limited to participating in discussions, (B) at least one program director from an accredited or pre-accredited programs, (C) at least one educator, (D) one public member per seven Commission members, (E) at least one practitioner, and (F) and additional members as deemed necessary who can provide needed expertise to the review process. NNPRFTC's goal is to ensure that Accreditation Commission members include leaders in the field of related postgraduate NP and NP/PA training and accreditation professionals whenever possible.

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Appointment to the Accreditation Commission: NNPRFTC Board members and the Executive Director who serve on the Accreditation Commission are appointed by NNPRFTC's Board. All other Accreditation Commission members are selected by the Accreditation Commission. The appointment to the Commission is for a term of three years, renewable for an additional three-year term. If an Accreditation Commission member cannot complete his/her term, a new Accreditation Commission member is appointed by the original appointing authority to serve out the remainder of the term. After completing that term, the replacement Accreditation Commission member is then eligible for two, full three-year terms. Following a maximum of two terms, individuals are then eligible for additional terms after a three-year period. The voting members of the Commission may vote to remove a member before his or her term is completed. The Accreditation Commission Chair and Vice Chair are elected by a majority of the voting Accreditation Commission members.

One of the core tenets of accreditation integrity is the autonomous functioning of the accreditation activities, including the management and elimination of potential bias that results from undue influence, whether intentional or unintentional. NNPRFTC's accrediting function is separate from and independent of any affiliated, associated, or related trade association.

Chair and Vice Chair of the Accreditation Commission: The Accreditation Commission will have a Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair will preside over meetings and set the agenda in consultation with the Executive Director. The Vice Chair will assume the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence. They will be elected by the Commission and will serve two-year terms, with biannual elections.

Independence of Accreditation Commission¹:

While the Accreditation Commission is a division of the NNPRFTC, it acts independently of the Board with respect to accreditation decisions, including the creation of policies and procedures related to accreditation decisions and the use of funds necessary to carry out its accreditation functions subject only to Board policies regarding reasonable expenses and expense reimbursement related to accreditation activities to avoid unnecessary spending. Specifically, the Accreditation Commission is responsible for a.) developing, monitoring, and maintaining NNPRFTC's accreditation standards; b.) reviewing and investigating all applications for accreditation and pre-accreditation; c.) making decisions with respect to the granting, denial, or revocation of such accreditations; d.) developing and adopting its own policies and procedures related to accreditation decisions; e.) determining reasonable budgetary requirements for carrying out its accreditation functions; and f.) working with the Board to develop an accreditation fee structure to ensure that the Board is able to provide sufficient funding to carry out accreditation functions. The Accreditation Commission will inform the

¹ As a programmatic accreditor that is not a Title IV gatekeeper, NNPRFTC is not subject to the US Department of Education's separate and independent requirements specified in 34 C.F.R. §602.14(a)(3). However, the Accreditation Commission desires to implement best practices regarding separate and independent functioning to the extent practical.

Board of all accreditation decisions, substantive changes to the policies and procedures, and management of the accreditation budget as detailed in (a) through (f) above. The Board will have no authority to review or change the Accreditation Commission's actions including but not limited to accreditation review processes, accreditation decisions, policy development, accreditation budget management, and the selection of voting Commission members. Therefore, the Accreditation Commission will be the entity that is recognized for decision-making authority by the USDE.

Integrity of Accreditation Activities:

The Accreditation Commission is responsible for developing, monitoring, and maintaining the accreditation standards, and for the adoption or amendment of such standards. In addition, the Accreditation Commission shall review and investigate all applications for accreditation and shall make all accreditation decisions, informing the Board as soon as practicable the granting, deferral, denial, revocation or appeal of such accreditations. The Accreditation Commission is responsible for assuring the public that accreditation actions follow fair procedures and comply with the Accreditation Commission's standards. The Accreditation Commission has final decision-making authority for all accreditation actions.

The integrity of the NNPRFTC's accreditation review process:

The accreditation review process relies on the unbiased and meaningful peer review of postgraduate training programs applying for accreditation, which in turn is dependent upon the operational structure and functioning of the Accreditation Commission. The Accreditation Commission's accreditation review process is rigorous and standardized and accommodates the unique aspects of each program. The Accreditation Commission conducts their business in accordance with the Accreditation Commission's policies and procedures and the United States Department of Education's (USDE) requirements for recognition.

Conflict of Interest: The Accreditation Commission's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#), [Conflict of Interest form](#) (COI) and [COI management](#) procedures are in place to assure that objective, independent decisions are rendered. All individuals involved in Accreditation review activities, including Accreditation Commission members, site visitors and content experts, are required complete current conflict of interest forms and to sign statements of agreement with conflict of interest policy and procedures on an annual basis. As such, when a program(s) is under review, and an Accreditation Commission member has a real or apparent conflict of interest with that program, as defined in the COI Policy, the Accreditation Commission member will inform the Chair of the Accreditation Commission and the Executive Director. In accordance with the COI policy, the Chair of the Accreditation Commission and the Executive Director will review the situation and determine if a conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest does in fact exist. If a conflict of interest as defined in the COI policy and a reasonable management plan to address the conflict cannot be developed in accordance with the COI policy, then the member will be informed and shall recuse him or herself from all deliberations

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regarding that program. To preserve the unimpaired functioning of the Accreditation Commission, another member of the Accreditation Commission will be designated to fulfill the first members' functional responsibilities as they pertain to the specific program's accreditation review. The Chair of the Accreditation Commission will make the functional reassignment. The reassignment will be limited in scope to the specific Accreditation Commission activities required to complete the review of the program in question. In the event that it is the Accreditation Chair has the conflict, the duties of the Accreditation Commission Chair will be assumed by the Vice Chair.

Decision-making: Assuring Consistency and Integrity: To ensure that decisions are based solely on the accreditation standards and are consistent (i.e.: reliable and valid), every three to five years evaluation of the Accreditation Commission's decision-making and manner of functioning shall occur. The evaluation will be conducted by members of the Accreditation Commission and one or more external representatives of the professional accreditation community. The periodic self-evaluations of the accreditation process shall incorporate input from accredited programs. The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the best practice guidelines for programmatic accreditation from the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (www.ASPA-usa.org.) A formal evaluation report will be shared with the Accreditation Commission and the Accreditation Commission will consider the findings and take action as appropriate.

Amendment of These Rules: These Rules may be amended by a simple majority of all voting members of the Accreditation Commission. The Board shall have no influence over the amendment of these Rules as they relate to the Accreditation Commission's independence as detailed in the section above entitled Independence of Accreditation Commission.
