

## Guidelines for the Solicitation of Written and Oral Third-Party Comments for an ACEN Site Visit

To make the accreditation process responsive to a broad range of constituents, the ACEN will receive written and/or oral third-party comments from the public concerning a program seeking initial accreditation or continuing accreditation.

1. All nursing programs seeking initial accreditation must provide an opportunity for written and oral third-party comments from the public.
2. All nursing programs seeking continuing accreditation must provide an opportunity for written and oral third-party comments from the public.
  - This applies only during a program's comprehensive review or a required follow-up visit.
  - ***This does not apply during a focused visit review process.***

The public is defined as any individual or group with an interest in but no direct responsibility for the development or delivery of a nursing program (e.g., patients/clients, non-nursing students, healthcare providers, and citizens). If an employee is unable to attend the meeting related to their respective department as scheduled on the site visit team's agenda, the employee may submit a written comment to the ACEN prior to the visit in accordance with the timeline.

All nursing programs must make a good faith effort to notify the public, beyond internal constituents, of the upcoming visit. The public must be provided with information about the visit and the public must be provided opportunities to comment about the program using written and/or oral means.

1. Six weeks before the site visit, the ACEN requires nursing programs to publish information for the public about the site visit using appropriate methods.
  - The ACEN encourages the use of no or low-cost means, such as nursing program electronic newsletter, governing organization electronic publications, governing organization/nursing program website, email, social media, and/or postings at clinical agencies used by the program.
  - The information must invite the public to submit written comments to the ACEN; see #2 below.
  - The information must invite the public to make oral comments to the peer evaluators on the site visit team; see #3 below.
2. The ACEN requires nursing programs to publish the ACEN contact information so that members of the public can submit written third-party comments to the ACEN about the program. Sometimes there are a few written third-party comments, sometimes many written third-party comments, and sometimes no written third-party comments are submitted. Irrespective of the number of written third-party comments, the objective is for members of the public to have an opportunity to make written third-party comments concerning a program. All written third-party comments will be shared with the peer evaluators on the site visit team.

3. The ACEN requires nursing programs to arrange a meeting during the site visit for the peer evaluators on the site visit team to meet with members of the public. Sometimes there are a few attendees, sometimes many attendees, and sometimes no attendees at this meeting. Irrespective on the number of attendees, the objective is for members of the public to have an opportunity to make oral third-party comments concerning a program.

## EXAMPLE

### PUBLIC NOTICE OF UPCOMING ACCREDITATION REVIEW VISIT BY THE ACEN

The [name of institution] wishes to announce that it will host a site visit for [initial]/ [continuing] accreditation of its [type of program] nursing program by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

You are invited to meet with the site visit team and share your comments about the program in person at a meeting scheduled at [time] on [day], [date], in [room location] of the [building] located at [street number, street, city, state].

Written comments are also welcome and should be submitted to the ACEN via email at [public-comments@acenursing.org](mailto:public-comments@acenursing.org) or to the ACEN office:

Attn: Accreditation Services  
Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing  
3390 Peachtree Rd NE, Suite 1400  
Atlanta GA, 30326

All written comments should be received by the ACEN by [month, day, year]\*.

\*Comments are due two weeks prior to the scheduled visit.