

Program Resources and Student Capacity

POLICY

This policy applies to accredited nurse anesthesia programs preparing students for entry into practice. Programs are required to provide information on student headcount **enrollment** data ~~annually each year as part of the Annual Report process~~. The Council will use these data to monitor overall growth of the programs it accredits to verify the adequacy of resources to support a program and to ensure the program is otherwise able to meet Council standards. The Council requires programs to provide information on student headcount enrollment data and seek prior approval for significant increases in class size. ~~verify there are adequate resources to support an education program that meets Council standards and to secure prior approval before increasing the number of students.~~

DEFINITION

Class Size: Class size is the total number of first year enrollees in one year based on NBCRNA data. For programs admitting more than one class per year, the total of all students enrolled in one year is considered to be a single class.

Significant Increase: Programs experiencing a significant increase in first-year enrollment must submit the Council's Application for Increasing Class Size. The Council considers a "significant increase" one that meets any of the following conditions:

- A proposed one-time class size increase of four students **OR** an increase that results in an enrollment cohort of 10% or greater than the program's approved Class Size, whichever is smaller.
- Incremental increases that result in an overall increase of four students **OR** a 10% increase in enrollment, whichever is smaller, as compared to the program's approved Class Size.
- For programs currently on National Certification Examination monitoring or with unresolved citations related to adequacy of resources, any increase in Class Size—even if one student—is considered significant. An Application for Increasing Class Size must be submitted to demonstrate there are adequate resources to support an education program that meets Council Standards.

PROCEDURE

1. Program requirements

- a. A program planning to significantly increase the number of first-year enrollees ~~students~~ must secure prior approval from the Council. An application is required to demonstrate that adequate resources are available to support the total number of students (ref. "Application for Increasing Class Size"). The application must be submitted to the Council and the increase must be approved prior to the enrollment date for the cohort in

which the increase will occur (see Glossary, “Enrollment”). The application must be submitted in accordance with the deadlines published by the Council:

- 1) For planned increases in class size:
 - a) Programs with start dates March through June must submit an application by November 1st of the previous calendar year.
 - b) Programs with start dates July through November must submit an application by March 1st of the year in which the class size increase will occur.
 - c) Programs with start dates December through February must submit an application by ~~the previous~~ August 1st of the previous calendar year.
 - d) The COA’s Evaluation and Analysis Committee will review programs’ fully completed applications at a regularly scheduled meeting (~~December, April, and September~~) and provide notification of its preliminary decision to programs within 45 business days.
- 2) For unplanned increases in class size:
 - a) Applications received outside of the designated submission timeframes will be reviewed by the Council, with the timing of committee review and preliminary approval determined by the Council on a case-by-case basis.

b. The application will include:

- 1) Rationale for the proposed increase.
- 2) Official start and end dates for the program.
- 3) The current number of enrolled students by year of enrollment.
- 4) The projected number of students for the next year (and percentage increase in total first-year enrollment the program will experience based on the additional enrollments).
- 5) The number of students on leave(s) of absence (LOA) and when they will be reinstated.
 - a) Students that are counted towards attrition (ref. “Attrition Monitoring”) and who are readmitted to the first year cohort of the program must be counted towards the program’s approved class size when considering enrollees for the next academic year. Students returning from a LOA who repeat a class but are not counted towards program attrition (and who do not restart the program with a new cohort) do not need to be accounted for when considering class size.
- 6) Plans for adequate resources (financial; program space to include: classrooms, labs, etc.; volume and variety of clinical experiences/number of sites; number of qualified faculty; support personnel, and student services) to demonstrate they are sufficient to provide for the total number of students including reinstated students from LOAs, if

any.

- c. Class Size increases that do not meet the COA definition of “significant” do not require submission of an *Application for Increasing Class Size*; however, programs are required to notify the COA of any increases in Class Size prior to the enrollment date for the cohort in which the increase will occur.

2. Council actions

- a. The Council will establish Class Size for new programs based on its review of existing resources at the time the program’s eligibility for accreditation is established (ref. “Eligibility for Accreditation”). This review is designed to ensure that such resources are adequate in relation to the number of students and that the programs will be able to meet Accreditation Standards.

~~a.—~~

- ~~b.—The Council will establish an initial class size for existing programs.~~

- ~~1) The established class size will equal the largest number of students admitted in any class during the previous 3 years starting with the date the policy was implemented.~~
- ~~2) For programs where the established class size would be 41 or more per class, the program must submit an application to the Council providing evidence there are sufficient resources to assure an education program that meets Council standards. **(Exception: If a program has undergone a satisfactory onsite review with the same number of students now as it had when it was last accredited. Example: a program is three years into a 10 year accreditation cycle and has the SAME number of first year students (45 first year students) when the initial class size is determined as it had when it was accredited (45 first year students), the program will not have to apply to the Council for approval to admit 45 students into an incoming class.)**~~

- ~~e.b.~~ The adequacy of resources for student education in accredited programs will be considered by the Council when reviewing applications for increasing the established class size to include the:

- 1) Number and types of clinical cases, including required specialty experiences, and COA-approved sites available for education. Include the minimum, maximum, and average number of case totals for the program’s most recent graduation cohort, in addition to a listing of COA-approved clinical sites impacted by the increase, as supporting documentation.
- 2) Number of qualified faculty in relation to the total number of students in the program, including adequate faculty resources for scholarly work oversight (ref. Glossary, “Scholarly work oversight”).
- 3) Sufficiency of financial support for an increased number of students.

- 4) Adequacy of physical resources, learning resources, support personnel, and student services.
- 5) National Certification Examination (NCE) pass rate of graduates, as calculated by the COA in accordance with the Certification Examination policy. Newly-accredited programs without NCE pass rate data may not request a significant increase in class size.
- 6) Most recent COA decision letter related to ~~C~~current accreditation status and length of accreditation.
- 7) Description of any~~ALL~~ unresolved concerns related to the adequacy of resources (i.e., Standards A.10.1-A.10.6), as identified in a COA decision letter resulting from an onsite review, review of the COA's midpoint ~~as well as~~ student and faculty evaluations, or other formal COA actions ~~results related to resources.~~

d.c. Program growth will be monitored:

- 1) By updating programs' approved Class Sizes following COA review and approval of the Application for Increasing Class Size (applies only to "significant increases").
- 2) By updating programs' approved Class Sizes upon notification of an increase that does not meet the COA definition of "significant increase" and therefore does not require submission of an Application for Increasing Class Size.
- ~~1~~3) Annually by reviewing NBCRNA data on first year enrollees and comparing it to first year enrollees in the prior year and the established number.
- ~~2~~4) By reaffirming or adjusting the established class size when programs are reviewed for continued accreditation.
- ~~3~~5) By adjusting the established class size at other times for reasons relating to adequacy of resources.

e.d. The Council will take such actions that it deems appropriate to address any deficiencies that it identifies at an institution or program as part of its review and evaluation. Actions can include but are not limited to:

- 1) Approval. An accreditation decision may include approval pending Chief Executive Officer or Executive Committee review of additional information as required by the Council.
- 2) Denial
- 3) Deferral of action
- 4) Progress report(s)
- 5) Full or focused Self Study report

- 6) Full or focused onsite review
- 7) Change in accreditation status
- 8) Show Cause

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