

WSR 25-12-079

PROPOSED RULES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

(Board of Nursing)

[Filed June 2, 2025, 7:15 a.m.]

Original Notice.

Preproposal statement of inquiry was filed as WSR 24-21-151.

Title of Rule and Other Identifying Information: Nurse administrator education and experience requirements for baccalaureate nursing education programs. The Washington state board of nursing (board) is proposing amendments to education and experience requirements for nurse administrators of baccalaureate nursing education programs in WAC 246-840-517 in response to E2SSB 5582 (chapter 126, Laws of 2023), codified as RCW 18.79.150.

Hearing Location(s): On July 11, 2025, at 1:15 p.m., at the Department of Labor and Industries, Room S119, 7273 Linderson Way S.W., Tumwater, WA 98501; or virtually via Zoom. Please follow this link to register for the virtual hearing, which will give you instructions to either join the meeting on a device or to call in to the meeting on the phone, <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/ncNbuiXcQ2ilOlSvzOZxNA>. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Date of Intended Adoption: July 11, 2025.

Submit Written Comments to: Jessilyn Dagum, P.O. Box 47864, Olympia, WA 98504-7864, email WABONRules@doh.wa.gov, fax 360-236-4738, <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/policyreview>, beginning the date and time of this filing, by June 25, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.

Assistance for Persons with Disabilities: Contact Jessilyn Dagum, phone 360-236-3538, fax 360-236-4738, TTY 711, email WABONRules@doh.wa.gov, by June 25, 2025.

Purpose of the Proposal and Its Anticipated Effects, Including Any Changes in Existing Rules: The purpose of the proposal is to amend WAC 246-840-517 to align with RCW 18.79.150 by maintaining the doctoral degree requirement for nurse administrators of baccalaureate nursing education programs while expanding the exception process. The proposed rule allows individuals without a doctoral degree or other specified qualifications to serve in this role under a board-approved comprehensive plan. Under the proposed rule, individuals who do not meet one or more of the required qualifications, including the doctoral degree requirement, may serve as a nurse administrator if the hiring institution submits a comprehensive plan within 30 days of hire. The comprehensive plan must include elements of mentorship, professional development, and annual evaluations over a two-year period. Additionally, a revised development plan must be submitted to the board each year over the two-year period based on the comprehensive plan and performance review of the nurse administrator.

The anticipated effect is to reduce barriers for qualified nurse leaders while maintaining program quality, supporting the nurse administrator's success in the role, and reducing turnover through structured support.

Reasons Supporting Proposal: The proposed rule implements RCW 18.79.150, which permits the board to approve baccalaureate nursing education programs led by nurse administrators who hold a graduate degree in nursing and have sufficient experience as a registered nurse, even if they do not hold a doctoral degree. Expanding the exception process provides greater flexibility to address workforce and leader-

ship needs while also building a structured plan for mentorship and professional development to support the nurse administrator's success.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 18.79.010, 18.79.110, and 18.79.150.

Statute Being Implemented: RCW 18.79.150.

Rule is not necessitated by federal law, federal or state court decision.

Name of Proponent: State board of nursing, governmental.

Name of Agency Personnel Responsible for Drafting: Jessilyn Dagum, 111 Israel Road S.E., Tumwater, WA 98501, 360-236-3538; Implementation: Gerianne Babbo, 111 Israel Road S.E., Tumwater, WA 98501, 360-236-4724; and Enforcement: Catherine Woodard, 111 Israel Road S.E., Tumwater, WA 98501, 360-236-4757.

A school district fiscal impact statement is not required under RCW 28A.305.135.

A cost-benefit analysis is required under RCW 34.05.328. A preliminary cost-benefit analysis may be obtained by contacting Jessilyn Dagum, P.O. Box 47864, Olympia, WA 98504-7864, phone 360-236-3538, fax 360-236-4738, TTY 711, email WABONRules@doh.wa.gov.

This rule proposal, or portions of the proposal, is exempt from requirements of the Regulatory Fairness Act because the proposal:

Is exempt under RCW 19.85.025(3) as the rules only correct typographical errors, make address or name changes, or clarify language of a rule without changing its effect; and rule content is explicitly and specifically dictated by statute.

Explanation of exemptions: Portions of the proposed rule are housekeeping changes to align the existing rule language with the proposed rule language. Administrative changes to subsections under WAC 246-840-517 (1), (2), (3), (5), and (6) are exempt from analysis under RCW 34.05.310 (4)(d) as they correct typographical errors, make name changes, or clarify language of the rule without changing its effect, or under RCW 34.05.310 (4)(e), rules the content of which is explicitly and specifically dictated by statute.

Scope of exemption for rule proposal:

Is partially exempt:

Explanation of partial exemptions: WAC 246-840-517 (1), (2), (5), and (6) make corrections to the rule formatting and are exempt under RCW 34.05.310 (4)(d) as the proposed changes clarify language and make typographical updates from "commission" to the "board." WAC 246-840-517(3) explains and clarifies requirements for baccalaureate and graduate nursing education programs and is exempt under RCW 34.05.310 (4)(e) as the proposed rule amendments are dictated by statute.

The proposed rule does not impose more-than-minor costs on businesses. Following is a summary of the agency's analysis showing how costs were calculated. **General Note:** Portions of the proposed rule that are significant were analyzed in the cost-benefit analysis as required under the Administrative Procedure Act, RCW 34.05.328, and estimated probable costs were determined. The calculated cost of the proposed rule is \$708 to the institution that has hired the nurse administrator and the nursing education program dean or director conducting the mentoring, which is less than the minor cost threshold of \$1,331 (\$18,011 for colleges, universities, and professional schools with nursing programs, on the high end). According to the North American Industry Classification System code 611210 for community colleges with nursing programs, the nurse administrator costs are indicated for

compliance with the rule for small businesses. In Washington state, there are 19 identified entities. Estimates of the cost are based on average staff time of 2,080 working hours per year at a median hourly wage of \$64.38 for an annual, 12-month contract. The activities outlined in the exception process by the proposed rule language require both the nurse administrator and their mentor to conduct 11 hours per year creating the development plan for a total of \$1,416 over the two-year period. Institutions may experience this cost only if they pursue the exception process; compliance is otherwise estimated at no additional cost if the hired nurse administrator meets all qualifications. The board determined that the proposed rule does not have a disproportionate impact on small businesses as compared to the 10 percent of businesses that are the largest businesses required to comply with the proposed rule. The rule provides a flexible pathway for compliance that is entirely optional and does not impose recurring or scaling costs on small businesses.

A copy of the detailed cost calculations may be obtained by contacting Jessilyn Dagum, P.O. Box 47864, Olympia, WA 98504-7864, phone 360-236-3538, fax 360-236-4738, TTY 711, email WABONRules@doh.wa.gov.

April 31, 2025

Alison Bradywood DNP, MN/MPH, RN, NEA-BC
Executive Director
Washington State Board of Nursing

RDS-6279.2

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 16-17-082, filed 8/17/16, effective 9/17/16)

WAC 246-840-517 Nurse administrator qualification requirements in nursing education programs located in Washington state. (1) The nursing education program administrator must be a professionally and academically qualified registered nurse with an active, unencumbered Washington nursing license.

~~((Practical or Associate Degree Nursing Education Programs))~~

(2) ~~((In a nursing education program offering practical or associate degree nursing education,))~~ The nurse administrator of a practical or associate degree nursing education program must have a minimum of:

(a) The following educational qualifications:

(i) A bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) from a nursing education program accredited by a national nursing education accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education and a graduate degree; or

~~((b))~~ (ii) A graduate degree from a nursing education program accredited by a national nursing education accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education; ~~((and~~

~~(e))~~ (b) Preparation in education that includes teaching adults, adult learning theory, teaching methods, curriculum development, and curriculum evaluation, or two years of teaching experience in nursing education that demonstrates this type of preparation;

~~((d))~~ (c) Curriculum development and administration experience;
~~((e))~~ (d) Five years of experience as a registered nurse including two years of experience in nursing education; and
~~((f))~~ (e) Current knowledge of nursing practice at the practical nurse or associate degree program level as appropriate.

~~(Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Education Programs)~~

~~(3) ((In a nursing education program offering baccalaureate or graduate degrees in nursing,))~~ The nurse ((administer)) administrator of a baccalaureate or graduate nursing education program must have:

(a) The following educational qualifications:

(i) A ((minimum of a)) graduate degree ((with a major)) in nursing((r)). The graduate degree must be from a ((nursing education)) program accredited by a national nursing education accreditation body recognized by the United States Department of Education; and

(ii) A doctoral degree ((either)) in nursing ((or a)), health, or a related educational field. The doctoral degree must be from a college or university accredited by both a ((national)) regional accrediting body and a national nursing accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education; ((or))

~~(b) ((A doctoral degree in nursing from a college or university accredited by a national nursing accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education; and~~

~~(e)) Preparation in education that includes teaching adults, adult learning theory, teaching methods, curriculum development, and curriculum evaluation, or two years of teaching experience in nursing education that demonstrates this type of preparation;~~

~~((d))~~ (c) Preparation or experience in nursing administration or educational administration; and

~~((e))~~ (d) At least five years of experience as a registered nurse including two years of experience in nursing education at or above the highest level of the nursing education program the nurse administrator will be administering.

~~The ((commission may grant an exception to the experience in nursing education requirement if the program can demonstrate that two academic years of ongoing educational consultation is provided to the nurse administrator))~~ board may grant an exception to the two years of experience in nursing education requirement, for nurse administrators of graduate nursing education programs, if the program can demonstrate that the nurse administrator will be provided with two academic years of ongoing educational mentorship by a person who meets or exceeds nurse administrator qualifications identified in this subsection.

(4) The board may grant an exception to any or all of the requirements in subsection (3) (a) (ii), (b), (c), or (d) of this section for nurse administrators of baccalaureate nursing education programs if the following conditions are met:

(a) The educational institution, parent institution, postsecondary educational institution, or governing entity submits to the board for approval within 30 days of hire a written comprehensive plan to support the nurse administrator's success in the role.

(i) The plan must address the nurse administrator's areas of exception as they relate to any or all of the requirements in subsection (3) (a) (ii), (b), (c), or (d) of this section.

(ii) The plan must include strategies such as ongoing mentorship by a qualified nurse administrator who meets or exceeds the qualifications in subsection (3) (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section, mentorship at the academic institution, structured professional development,

and additional education to address gaps in teaching methods, curriculum development, and nursing administrative experience.

(iii) An individual with two or more years of experience as an academic nurse administrator is not required to have a comprehensive plan.

(b) An evaluation of both the comprehensive plan and the performance of the nurse administrator must occur each year for a two-year period. The evaluation should involve input from the nurse administrator, mentors, nursing faculty, and administrative peers.

(c) An actionable development plan must be submitted to the board each year for two years, based on the data and analysis of the comprehensive plan and performance review of the nurse administrator.

(5) The nurse administrator shall be responsible for creation and maintenance of an environment conducive to teaching and learning through:

(a) Facilitation of the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.

(b) Communication and decision making regarding program needs, budget preparation and monitoring, and ongoing involvement with central administration and other units of the parent institution.

(c) Facilitation of faculty development and performance review for full-time and part-time faculty consistent with the policies of the institution and standards of professional nursing practice, and encouragement of faculty to seek ways of improving clinical skills and methods of demonstrating continued educational and clinical competence.

(d) Evaluation of clinical performance of nursing faculty in practice situations must be performed by a qualified licensed nurse as appropriate to the level of practice being taught.

~~((d))~~ (e) Facilitation of faculty recruitment and appointment. The nurse administrator of the nursing education program shall establish a goal for acquiring faculty with diversity in ethnicity, gender, clinical specialty and experience.

~~((e))~~ (f) Recommendation of faculty for appointment, promotion, tenure, and retention consistent with the policies of the institution and standards in this chapter.

~~((f))~~ (g) Facilitation of the development of long-range goals and objectives for the nursing program.

~~((g))~~ (h) Facilitation of recruitment, selection, and advisement of students.

~~((h))~~ (i) Assurance that the rules of the ~~((commission))~~ board are effectively implemented.

~~((i))~~ (j) Notification to the ~~((commission))~~ board of events as identified in WAC 246-840-513 and 246-840-554(3).

~~((5))~~ (6) The nurse administrator must have sufficient time provided to fulfill relevant administrative duties and responsibilities.