### SARP Policy 05-001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>SARP Eligibility Criteria and Admission Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The purpose of this policy is to establish the eligibility criteria and process for admission into the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program (SARP or Program) of the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing (Board).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Adopted/Revised</td>
<td>April 1990 (adopted); April 1998 (revised); December 14, 2005 (revised and renumbered); October 22, 2008 (corrected)¹; May 12, 2010 (reviewed and corrected); December 14, 2011 (revised); September 11, 2013 (revised); May 13, 2015 (revised), November 14, 2018 (rescinded).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Eligibility Criteria | SARP applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria at the time that they submit their application:  
1. The applicant must hold a Massachusetts nursing license that is current and in good standing. The applicant will not meet this criteria if his or her license is expired, surrendered (disciplinary or non-disciplinary), suspended, revoked, or on probation (disciplinary).  
2. The applicant must be either a first-time participant in a program designed for substance abuse rehabilitation for licensed professionals, or a participant in good standing with a comparable program seeking to transfer into SARP. The applicant will not meet this criteria if his or her history includes:  
a. Prior admission into SARP, or  
b. Prior admission into a program for substance abuse rehabilitation offered by or affiliated with another professional licensing body (disciplinary or non-disciplinary) if:  
i. Participation has concluded as a result of successful completion, withdrawal from the program and/or termination from the program for non-compliance, or  
ii. Participation has not concluded, but the applicant is currently non-compliant.  
3. The applicant must possess the physical and psychological ability to participate in SARP. The applicant will not meet this criteria if he or she has a medical, surgical and/or mental health condition, except as provided for in SARP policy 13-01, that:  
a. prevents the applicant from practicing nursing in a safe and competent manner,  
b. necessitates treatment with a medication that is a substance of abuse². |

¹ Clerical corrections only.

² SARP Policy 05-001: SARP Eligibility Criteria and Admission Process
### Criteria (continued)

unless the applicant presents documentation from his or her health care provider\(^3\) which:

i. specifies the medication and confirms the medical necessity, and

ii. opines that the applicant will be able to safely discontinue use of the medication prior to the time of admission into SARP.

c. prevents the applicant from complying with SARP requirements.

4. The applicant must be of good moral character. The applicant will not meet this criteria if he or she has a criminal history that would result in permanent exclusion from initial nursing licensure under Licensure Policy 00-01, Good Moral Character.

5. The applicant must be in good standing and be eligible for current licensure before all other professional licensing bodies that have issued a license, registration or certification to him or her, except that the applicant may have an active disciplinary restriction imposed by another professional licensing body if:

a. the basis for the discipline is substance abuse, or

b. the Board has declined to take reciprocal disciplinary action.

### Admission Process

**Application.** The admission process begins when the applicant submits a signed application, in which the applicant acknowledges that he or she has a substance abuse condition, discloses criminal history and discipline history, and agrees to refrain from all nursing practice pending admission into SARP.

**Authorization.** The applicant must provide the authorization necessary for the Board to obtain a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Report.

**Preliminary Review.** Upon receipt of the application, the SARP Coordinator assigned to the applicant shall review the application, licensure status, criminal history, prior participation history and discipline history and determines whether the applicant may be ineligible for admission based on those factors.

**Assessment.** The SARP Coordinator shall provide the contact information of a SARP designated substance abuse specialist (designated provider) to the applicant. The applicant must obtain a written evaluation and recommendation for admission to SARP from the designated provider. The applicant shall be responsible for scheduling the assessment with the designated provider and for all associated costs. The applicant shall cooperate with the assessment by providing information, body fluid samples and appropriate authorization for release of information to the designated provider as requested.

**Approval.** Upon receipt of the designated provider’s assessment, the SARP Coordinator shall schedule an interview of the applicant with the Substance

---

\(^2\) See Attachment A for a complete list of controlled substances considered to be a “substances of abuse” for SARP purposes.

\(^3\) All documentation must be prepared on the health care provider’s letterhead and signed by the health care provider.
Abuse Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee (SAREC) for their recommendation on whether to approve, disapprove and/or impose conditions upon admission. Where appropriate under SARP Policy 05-002, the SARP Coordinator may directly recommend admission to the Board.

**Post-approval Requirements.** Following approval for admission, the applicant must:

1. enroll in the Board’s approved Drug Testing Management Company (DTMC) urine testing program;
2. comply with any conditions for admission imposed by the Board;
3. attend a SARP admission orientation. The applicant will be allowed only one (1) excused absence.
4. sign a Consent Agreement for SARP Participation (CASP). The terms of the CASP shall be specified by the SARP Coordinator and/or SAREC and approved by the Board.

Upon execution of the CASP by both the applicant and the Board, the applicant is admitted into SARP.

**Termination of the Admission Process.**

1. The SARP Coordinator will terminate the admission process at any point prior to the execution of the CASP if:
   a. The applicant withdraws his or her application,
   b. The applicant is not eligible for admission,
   c. The applicant fails to obtain an assessment in a timely fashion,
   d. The applicant fails to comply with a Bridge Agreement under SARP Policy 07-001,
   e. The Board disapproves admission,
   f. The applicant fails to attend a first-time scheduled SARP admission orientation without good cause (unexcused absence), or fails to attend a subsequent scheduled SARP admission orientation for any reason, or
   g. The applicant fails to complete post-approval requirements in a timely fashion.

2. The SARP Coordinator shall determine whether the applicant already has a pending disciplinary complaint based on substance abuse related conduct. If there is a pending complaint, the SARP Coordinator shall provide the SARP record to the investigator, complaint resolution coordinator, board counsel or prosecutor currently handling the complaint, together with notice that the application process was terminated. If there is no pending complaint, the SARP Coordinator shall file one and shall include the SARP record as supporting documentation.

3. The SARP Coordinator shall notify the applicant that the admission process was terminated and that the SARP record has been made a part of the disciplinary complaint file.