

Frequently Asked Questions

Employers of Internationally Educated Nurses

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1. Does the College grant licenses to Internationally Educated Nurses (IEN) using a reciprocal process?

No. The College has a strict credentialing process to ensure that international educated nurses meet the same standard for licensing as nurses educated in Nova Scotia.

2. What is the licensing process for IENs in Nova Scotia?

There are three main steps in the licensing process for IENs. The first is an application process through the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS). NNAS coordinates a consistent national approach for internationally educated nurses (IENs) seeking registration/licensure to practice in Canadian jurisdictions. The intent of the assessment is to ensure that IENs core nursing education is substantively equivalent to the education here in Nova Scotia. Once the NNAS assessment is complete, the IENs file is sent to CLPNNS for review to determine if additional competency/clinical assessment is required. Finally, each IEN must successfully complete the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Exam (CPNRE). For the most part the process is linear and the IEN moves from one step to another. In Nova Scotia, approval to write CPNRE is the last step in the process. Successful completion of the CPNRE permits the IEN to apply for an active practicing license.

3. Why do some IENs license as RNs and others LPNs?

Typically, LPNs are only educated and utilized in North America. Nurses coming to Canada from Europe, Asia and Africa are educated at the registered nurse level. There are variations in the educational requirements of registered nursing programs globally and there are variations in the professional role and scope of the RN internationally. Sometimes a credential assessment will identify gaps in the education of IEN. In order to qualify to write the Canadian Registered Nurse Exam (CRNE), the IEN is required to bridge the gaps with additional nursing education in Canada.

It is not unusual to find during a practice assessment that the IENs practice is more consistent with the Canadian LPN rather than an RN. Most times the gaps identified at the LPN level are moderate and can be easily bridged. Once the gaps have been successfully filled, the IEN may qualify to write the Canadian Practice Nurse Registration Examination (CPNRE). LPN licensure provides the IEN with another licensing option to get them into the nursing workforce. Oftentimes, once successfully licensed as LPNs, IENs begin working on completing the additional nursing education to qualify to write the CPRNE.

4. How long does the licensing process take?

The licensing process does not begin until the IEN has made application to CLPNNS, the necessary fees are paid and the College receives the report from NNAS. When these steps are complete, the College reviews the NNAS report and application to determine the next steps (e.g., approve to write the CPNRE, remediation or additional assessments). The length of time will vary between applicant based on the type and nature of the evaluations that is required.

5. Does the College provide support to IENs?

The College works with each IEN applicant to develop an individualized support plan based on the findings from NNAS. If the gaps identified by CLPNNS are too broad to be bridged, the College will terminate the licensing process and recommend that the IEN enroll in an LPN program, such as the one at Nova Scotia Community College. If gaps are moderate, the College may work with the IEN and NSCC to create a remediation plan with the community college. When remediation is complete, the College continues with licensing process. If there are no gaps, the College works with the IEN to move forward in the licensing process.

The College, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College, has developed a Pathway to Success Program for IENs. This program is a series of educational sessions designed to assist IENs in the understanding of the LPN role and scope of practice in Nova Scotia. It also prepares participants for the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Exam (CPRNE). All IENs whether their gaps are minimal or moderate are encouraged to complete the Pathway to Success Program. There is no cost for the program to the IEN if they are licensing in Nova Scotia. This program has been so successful that it has been won a national award from the Foreign Credentials Referral Office and Integration (FCRO) Branch of Citizen and Immigration Canada. Click the link to see more about the Pathway to success Program <http://clpnns.ca/pathway-success-education-program-iens/#sthash.j58aXWR8.dpuf>

6. What are the different types of licenses that an IEN may get?

Potentially, an IEN may be issued one of three different types of licenses. The first is *Active Practicing*. This is full licensure indicating that the IEN has meet all the necessary requirements (including passing the CPNRE) and may practice accordingly. A *Temporary License* is issued to an IEN who has met all the licensing requirements and awaiting completion of the CPNRE. If the IEN passes the exam the license is moved to active practicing, if they fail, it is move to inactive and they must reapply to take the exam. A third and much less common license is *Active Practicing with Conditions and Restrictions*. Typically you would only see this type of license when an IEN moves form another Canadian province where they had full LPN licensure in that province, but is missing an educational component required for Nova Scotia. The conditions and restrictions are time limited and outline what practice contexts the IEN would not be permitted to engage in. Once the IEN completes the mandatory education requirement, the condition and restrictions are lifted and the license is moved to active practicing.

7. An IEN in my facility has a temporary license. Are there any restrictions with this license?

No. This fully active license has been issued because the IEN has met all the requirements for licensure and is waiting to write the national exam.

8. An IEN (who is an RN in her home country) in my facility, is working as a Patient Care Worker (PCW). She has been approved to write the CPRNE. Since she is an RN in her home country and approved to write the LPN exam here, can she perform client assessments or client teaching?

No. Without an active practicing license (either RN or LPN), the IEN practice is limited to the PCW scope of employment.

<p>9. Is the application process transparent, impartial and fair?</p> <p>Yes. The IEN licensing process is open and transparent and consistently meets the requirement of the Fair Registration and Practices Act (FRPA). Click the link for more information about FRPA http://clpnns.ca/fair-registration-practices-act-nova-scotia-frpa/ .</p>
<p>10. Is the process consistent with other jurisdictions?</p> <p>Yes. Each jurisdiction in Canada has their own process. There are variations in timing and sequencing, however the licensing outcomes are consistent.</p>
<p>11. We are sponsoring some IENs in our facility; does that mean we have to pay for the licensing process?</p> <p>This is an organizational issue. Please refer to your organizational policies on this subject.</p>
<p>12. If an IEN is licensed in another province, will they qualify for a license in Nova Scotia?</p> <p>The Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) legislation allows for licensure to be transferred from one province to another. Occasionally there are variances in education requirements for LPNs in other provinces. If any nurse does not fully meet the educational requirements for LPNs in Nova Scotia, they are granted a license with Conditions and Restrictions which will allows them to work while completing the necessary education. Click the link for more information on the AIT http://www.ait-aci.ca/index_en/ait.htm .</p>
<p>13. Do IENs have to pass an English language test?</p> <p>Yes. Each IEN must demonstrate English language proficiency in listening, speaking, writing and reading. Acceptable scores have been harmonized across all the nursing regulatory authorities in Canada. Click the link for more information http://clpnns.ca/english-proficiency-nursing-program-requirements/ .</p>
<p>14. Do all IENs have to write the CPNRE?</p> <p>Yes. Some IENs, who graduate from well known, approved and reputable nursing programs, <i>may</i> be granted a temporary LPN license while waiting to write the CPNRE.</p>
<p>15. An IEN in my facility failed the CPNRE, what now?</p> <p>Candidates are eligible to write CPNRE up to three times. IENs that are not successful with the exam are strongly encouraged to complete the Colleges' online Nursing Fundamentals course. This course is free for the IEN. If so desired, the IEN may also attend another Pathway to Success program for additional assistance in preparation for the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Exam (CPRNE). . Click the link for more information about the Pathway to Success program http://clpnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Pathway-to-Success.pdf.</p>
<p>16. How are IENs introduced into the Canadian Health Care System?</p> <p>Every IEN is required to complete Orientation to the Canadian Health Care System, offered through the Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre (RNPDC). This course must be completed as part of the process to qualify to write the CPNRE. Click the link to view more information about this course http://www.rnpdc.nshealth.ca/InternationalLearners/Orientation-IEHPs/ .</p>
<p>17. Do other internationally educated health professionals qualify for an LPN license?</p> <p>No. In order to qualify for an LPN license in Nova Scotia, applicants must graduate from an approved practical nursing or nursing program.</p>

<p>18. An IEN is working as a Patient Support Worker (PSW) while they are waiting for approval to get an LPN license. Can these hours count toward their annual LPN hourly requirement?</p> <p>No. Only hours accumulated in a role or position that <i>requires</i> LPN licensure can be counted towards the annually hourly requirement.</p>
<p>19. What is the annual hourly requirement for IENs?</p> <p>The hourly requirement is 1000 hours over five years or 500 hours in the year preceding initial Nova Scotia licensure. The requirement is the same for all LPNs regardless of where they were educated.</p>
<p>20. An IEN has both an RN and LPN license. Can they count the hours worked towards both licenses?</p> <p>No. RNs and LPNs have different scopes of practice, so hours accumulated in one role do not apply to the other.</p>
<p>21. Does the College support dual licensure?</p> <p>There is no legislative reason why a nurse could not possess an RN and LPN licenses at the same time. That said there is a potential for role confusion for a nurse working in both roles. The nurse and the employer are accountable take precautions to minimize this risk. The College strongly recommends that a dually licensed nurse decide which license they would like to maintain and rescind the other. Click the link to view a position description on Dual Licensure http://clpnns.ca/positionstatements/CLPNNS_DualLicensure.pdf .</p>
<p>22. Does the IEN, who is an RN in their home country, automatically meet the mandatory education requirements (medication administration and health assessment) that Nova Scotia based LPNs have to meet?</p> <p>Most do, however, each is to be assessed on an individual basis. The mandatory education requirements for all LPNs came into effect on November 1, 2103, so any IEN who does not meet the requirement, may not qualify to write the CPNRE until they first meet the mandated education requirement.</p>
<p>23. Can the IEN write the CPNRE off-shore?</p> <p>No. Currently, the CPNRE may only be written in Canada.</p>
<p>24. Do the IENs who are RNs in their home country write the same national exams as Canadian educated LPNs?</p> <p>Yes. All IENs must write and successfully pass the CPNRE for LPNs.</p>
<p>25. Is the pass rate the same for IENs as it is Canadian educated LPNs?</p> <p>IENs that complete the Pathway to Success program offered by the College have similar first-time pass rates as Canadian graduates.</p>
<p>26. How does an IEN get a work visa?</p> <p>Work Visas are provided by the Office of Immigration. The College has no role in the Visa process. Click the link to view more information for New Immigrants http://clpnns.ca/immigrating-to-nova-scotia/ .</p>