



As of June 3 2019, the Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) was formed to regulate licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) on behalf of the public, replacing the former College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia (CLPNNS) and College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (CRNNS) (the “legacy Colleges”).

Although the information in this document reflects our most current information about this topic, you will notice the content refers to the previous relevant legislation and the legacy College that published this document prior to June 3, 2019.

We appreciate your patience while we work towards updating all of our documents to reflect our new name, legislation and brand.

If you have additional questions about this document, please contact a NSCN Practice Consultant at practice@nscn.ca.





CRNNS Registration & Licensure Guide

for Internationally Educated Nurses



College of

**REGISTERED NURSES
OF NOVA SCOTIA**

Setting the Standard for Care.

Welcome

Welcome to the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (CRNNS). We are excited to welcome you as a partner and to share information with you about how to become registered and licensed with the CRNNS.

Internationally Educated Nurse Registration Guide

The *CRNNS Registration & Licensure Guide for Internationally Educated Nurse* is a step-by-step handbook to help you navigate our registration and licensure processes. The handbook provides you with all the information you need to begin the process of becoming an RN in Nova Scotia. On top of the step-by-step information, you will also notice quick tips and important reminders to help you avoid common registration mistakes and issues.

Registration Department

As an internationally educated nurse, your first interactions with CRNNS will be through our Registration Department. Our Registration Department is responsible for registering and issuing licences to practise nursing. You cannot practise nursing in Nova Scotia without a licence. Our Registration Department is committed to being transparent, accountable and efficient in our registration processes so every eligible RN and NP is able to practise nursing in Nova Scotia. We pride ourselves on our customer service and in being available through email, phone or in person to discuss any registration questions or concerns you may have.

Our Role

CRNNS is the regulatory body for almost 10,000 registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. We exist as an organization because the government has given the responsibility to oversee nursing practice to RNs and NPs themselves. The public trusts that RNs and NPs practise with the public interest as a priority and it is our role to ensure that nursing practice – in the public interest – is maintained.

As a relational regulator, our goal is always to build positive relationships by being transparent, inclusive and available to you and our stakeholders while delivering on our mandate to protect the public. At CRNNS, we:

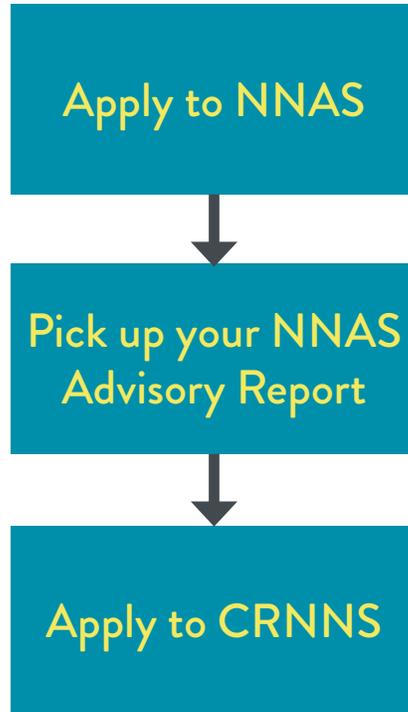
- [Issue licences to qualified RNs and NPs practising in Nova Scotia](#)
- [Set the nursing practice standards](#)
- [Approve nursing education programs](#)
- [Enhance the continuing competence of nurses](#)
- [Address complaints received about nursing practice](#)

If you have any additional questions, please [contact us](#). Thank you.

Introduction

In order to become licenced as an RN in Nova Scotia, you must submit two applications: one to the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) and one to CRNNS.

A visual graph of the process is below.



Popular Question! Where Does the Application Process Start?

The application process starts when you apply to NNAS. When you start the application process with NNAS, be sure to include all the regulatory bodies in Canada that you wish to apply for (e.g., LPN, RPN and RN regulatory bodies). This will save you time and money.

Application Steps

There are three steps in the application process.

STEP 1: APPLY TO NNAS

You must apply to NNAS first at nnas.ca. The stages of the NNAS application process include:

1. Register with NNAS, complete the forms and pay the NNAS fees
2. As NNAS receives all required documents, you can track the progress of your NNAS application online
3. NNAS determines the validity and authenticity of your documents
4. NNAS assesses your file for comparability to Canadian standards for entry-to-practice, defines gaps and prepares your NNAS Advisory Report.

CRNNS is not involved in step one. Visit the NNAS website at nnas.ca for more information.

STEP 2: PICK UP YOUR NNAS ADVISORY REPORT

Once your NNAS Advisory Report is complete, you must pick it up through the NNAS web portal and formally apply to CRNNS.

Popular Question! How Do I Apply to CRNNS After Receiving my Advisory Report from NNAS?

After receiving your Advisory Report from NNAS, you must complete our CRNNS paper application and pay for an initial assessment. The paper application can be downloaded from our website at crnns.ca/registration/.

STEP 3: APPLY TO CRNNS

Once you have received your NNAS Advisory Report from the NNAS, you can apply to the CRNNS by completing the *Application for Initial Registration Assessment for IENS Who Are Not Currently Licensed in Canada* form and pay the initial assessment fee.

Both the application form and the fee payment (\$575.00) are on our website. Registration and licensure requirements and fees are subject to change at any time.

Stay Informed Along the Way:

If you need an update on your initial registration application once you have applied to CRNNS in step 3, please email ien@crnns.ca. You will get a response in 3-5 business days.

CRNNS IEN Registration & Licensure Components

After you apply to us, there are a number of registration and licensure components that you must meet before being eligible to practise nursing in Nova Scotia.

CRNNS Assesses Your Application

Once we have received your application, we will review your NNAS Advisory Report and application documents to determine one or more of the following:

1. you are required to submit further information or documentation (e.g., English Language Proficiency Test) to CRNNS.
2. your program along with your nursing experience and other education are not substantially equivalent, you will be required to successfully complete one of the following in Nova Scotia:
 - a. competence assessment and any required bridging education, up to and including a baccalaureate in nursing; or
 - b. nursing re-entry program.
3. you meet all CRNNS requirements and are now eligible to apply to take the NCLEX-RN® Exam.
4. you are ineligible for registration with the CRNNS.

Once CRNNS assesses your application, you will receive a decision in writing via email. This assessment usually takes up to eight weeks.

Pass the RN Jurisprudence Exam

Once you apply to us, you can also apply to take the CRNNS RN Jurisprudence Exam. You do not have to take the exam at this time; however, you must take the exam before applying for a temporary licence or registration and licensure.

This is an open book, online exam and you will have four hours to complete the exam. We offer a number of supports to help you prepare for the Jurisprudence Exam, including:

- [RN Study Guide](#)
- [Jurisprudence FAQs](#)

You can access more information and resources is on our website.

Quick Fact! Most of your international application forms sent to NNAS or CRNNS expire after two years. Canadian verifications of licensure and employer references (e.g. LPN licensure) expire after six months. Your English Language Proficiency Test expires two years from the date you took it.

Popular Question! Can I Apply if I Have Graduated from a Specialized Nursing Program?

Your nursing program must have provided theory and clinical instruction in adult medicine and surgery. If you graduated from a specialized program (e.g., psychiatry/mental health, pediatrics, midwifery), you are not eligible for registration unless you also have general nursing preparation.

Receive Eligibility to take NCLEX-RN Exam

CRNNS will contact you in writing via email when you are eligible to take the NCLEX-RN Exam. You must pass the NCLEX-RN Exam in order to be eligible for registration and licensure with CRNNS.

Quick Fact! If you passed the NCLEX-RN Exam after 1982 you are not required to re-take the exam.

Apply for a temporary licence (optional)

Once you are eligible to take the NCLEX-RN Exam, you may also then eligible to apply for a CRNNS temporary licence. A temporary licence is a unique licence that allows you to temporarily practise nursing, with some conditions and restrictions, until you are able to obtain an active-practising licence.

The temporary licence creates the balance between providing nurses with clinical experience to improve their nursing competencies while at the same time creating practical safeguards so client safety remains high. You must have a temporary licence before starting employment orientation (including classroom orientation).

You must pass the RN Jurisprudence Exam before being eligible for a temporary licence.

If you apply for a temporary licence, you must provide us with a clear Canadian Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)/ Criminal Record Check (CRC). Canadian Vulnerable Sector Check and International Criminal Record Checks can be requested online through the [Canadian Securities Institute \(CSI\)](#) – delivered to us electronically usually within 24 hours – or through your local police or RCMP detachment.

If you have worked as an RN outside of Canada in the past two years, you must submit an International CRC from the country where you last worked.

VSCs and CRCs can be requested online through the Canadian Securities Institute (CSI) – delivered to us electronically usually within 24 hours – or through your local police or RCMP detachment.

Submit your original hard copy of your Canadian VSC/CRC and International CRC to CRNNS by mail or in person. The original hard copy may be returned to you upon request. A Canadian VSC/CRC and International CRC expires six months after they are issued.

Pass the NCLEX-RN Exam

You must pass the NCLEX-RN Exam in order to be eligible for registration and licensure with CRNNS. There is no limit to the number of times you can write the NCLEX-RN exam with CRNNS. However passing the NCLEX is only one of several registration and licensure requirements you must meet before you can become registered and licenced. A complete list of all general registration and licensure requirements are [found here](#).

Prepare for the NCLEX-RN Exam

Before you take the exam, please ensure you are emotionally and physically ready and able to do so. The NCLEX-RN Exam is available year-round in Halifax, Nova Scotia as well as each May in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

To prepare you for the NCLEX-RN Exam, the following resources are available on our [website](#):

- NCLEX Examination Candidate Bulletin
- NCLEX Information Flyer
- NCLEX-RN Myths & Facts
- NCLEX-RN Test Plans
- NCLEX-RN Exam FAQ
- NCLEX Using CAT Video

Access to more information and resources are on our [website](#). The total fee to take the NCLEX-RN Exam is \$503.75.

Apply for Registration and Licensure with CRNNS

When you receive a letter from CRNNS stating that you have passed the NCLEX-RN Exam, you will also receive instructions on how to apply for registration and licensure.

You must pass the RN Jurisprudence Exam before being eligible for registration and licensure with CRNNS. At this point, you may have already passed the exam.

Once you have applied and paid, we will review your application to determine your eligibility for registration and licensure. Visit our website to learn more about the [criteria for entry to the register and active-practising or transitional roster](#).

Other Important Information

Keeping Your Documents Current

You are responsible to ensure your application remains up to date. Once you submit your application and pay your initial assessment fee to CRNNS, you can set up an account on our [AFIA portal](#) which will allow you to monitor the expiry dates of your application documents.

If any part of your application expires prior to you becoming registered/licenced with the CRNNS, your file will be placed on hold until updated documents are received. You will not be permitted to receive a temporary licence or register/licence with the CRNNS if your application is not up to date. This may not be the case if you are working in Nova Scotia with a current temporary licence.

Application Expiry

If your application documents expire and you have not been in contact with the CRNNS for one year, your file is considered to have expired and it will be closed. The file can also be closed at any time upon your request. If you wish to re-apply to CRNNS, you will be required to re-apply to NNAS and meet the CRNNS regulatory requirements in place at the time of re-application, including payment of applicable fee(s).

Questions about Immigration and/or Employment

Since CRNNS is the regulatory body for RNs and NPs in Nova Scotia, we are not equipped to best answer questions about immigration and/or employment. For information about immigration, work visas or other related questions, contact the [Citizenship and Immigration Canada](#) office closest to you.

Meeting the English Language Proficiency Requirement

To practice nursing safely, competently and compassionately, nurses must be able to communicate proficiently with their clients and the other members of the interdisciplinary team in the English language. For this reason, all applicants must meet our English language proficiency requirement before they can be found eligible for registration and licensure.

There are four ways you can meet the CRNNS English language proficiency requirement. Below we explain these options and the supporting evidence, including documentation and information, you must provide for each.

Four Ways to Meet this Requirement

There are four ways to demonstrate English language proficiency:

1. Provide an English language proficiency test score that meets CRNNS' requirement;
2. Provide evidence to CRNNS that you completed an English language nursing program in a jurisdiction that appears on our [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#);
3. Submit information from your employer(s) that shows you have worked as a nurse in a country that appears on our [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#) for the last 24 months; or,
4. Show that you have met the English language proficiency requirements of a Canadian nursing regulatory body (licensed practical nurse or registered psychiatric nurse) and hold a licence to practice nursing with that regulatory body for the current licensure year.

Note: CRNNS can require you to submit an English language proficiency test score if the evidence you provide is deemed insufficient to establish proficiency in English or if there is evidence that leads CRNNS to question your English language proficiency.

Option #1: Provide an approved English language proficiency test that meets our minimum score

The approved English language proficiency tests for CRNNS are:

1. Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN); and,
2. International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

The acceptable minimum score on these English language proficiency tests are:

TEST COMPONENT	CELBAN	IELTS
Writing	7	7
Speaking	8	7
Listening	10	7.5
Reading	8	6.5
Total	N/A	7

You cannot mix and match various tests or test components to achieve a passing score. All components of the IELTS and CELBAN test must be completed on the same test date.

When an English language proficiency test score expires, CRNNS may exempt you from providing an updated language proficiency test result when you provide evidence (to the satisfaction of CRNNS) that you now meet one of the other three criteria explained below. Note: the expired English language proficiency test score must have met the CRNNS requirement in place at the time of the submission.

Option #2: Provide evidence to CRNNS that you completed an English language nursing program in a country that appears on our [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#).

When you are considering this option, you must meet both parts:

1. Complete a nursing program that meets our definition; and
2. The nursing program must be completed in English in one of the countries that appear on the CRNNS [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#).

Defining Nursing Programs

For meeting this requirement, nursing program has been defined by CRNNS to include the following programs or their equivalent:

1. A program that led to initial registration/licensure as a registered nurse;
2. A nursing re-entry program;
3. A Masters in nursing program;
4. A PhD nursing program;
5. A completed post-RN program of nursing instruction in a jurisdiction that appears on the CRNNS [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#). Programs that use 100% online and/or distance methodology do not meet the definition of nursing program for the purpose of this policy. In order to meet this criteria, the courses must have contained theory and clinical instruction with:
 - a. no more than 50% of theoretical instruction being delivered through online or distance education; and,
 - b. 300 hours of clinical instruction completed through face-to-face client interaction and not through simulation.

Identifying the countries on the CRNNS English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List

As of October 2018 the CRNNS English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List includes only English language nursing programs (see the definition of nursing programs in option 2) taught in the following countries/territories:

1. The United Kingdom
2. The United States of America
3. Australia
4. New Zealand
5. The Republic of Ireland
6. Antigua and Barbuda
7. The Bahamas
8. Barbados
9. Belize
10. Canada
11. Dominica
12. Grenada
13. Guyana
14. Jamaica
15. St. Kitts and Nevis
16. St Lucia

17. St Vincent and the Grenadines
18. Trinidad and Tobago
19. The British Antarctic Territory (BAT)
20. The British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT)
21. The Falkland Islands
22. The Isle of Man
23. Jersey
24. Guernsey
25. Gibraltar
26. The Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia on Cyprus
27. The U.S. Virgin Islands

CRNNS' [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#) will be reviewed every three years at which time countries will be considered for inclusion on this list or exclusion from the list. The list can be revised if at any time during the three years new information becomes available indicating that a country should be added to or deleted from the list. (e.g., Written information obtained from reliable sources support that the English spoke in the country is similar to that of English spoken in Canada.)

CRNNS may contact third parties such as regulatory bodies, schools of nursing and government agencies to collect information to support the addition or removal of a country on the CRNNS [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#).

How do countries get added to the CRNNS English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List?

The criteria that we use to add a country to the CRNNS [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#) include but are not limited to:

1. The country appears on the Nursing and Midwifery Council's List of Accepted English Speaking Countries; or
2. CRNNS has determined that at least 75% of the time nursing programs offered in the country provide:
 - a. textbooks and material written in English;
 - b. lectures, interactive lessons and examinations in English; and
 - c. clinical experience and training, including interactions with clients, interdisciplinary team members and faculty/instructors, are in English.

How do countries get removed from the CRNNS English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List?

CRNNS will remove a country from the CRNNS [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#) when information is received that calls into question whether the English spoken in that country is linguistically similar to English spoken in Canada.

Option #3: Submit information from your employer(s)

In order to apply this option to your application you must have worked as a nurse (RN, LPN or RPN) in one or more countries on the CRNNS [English Language Proficiency Test Exemption List](#) for a minimum of 24 months immediately prior to your application to us.

If you want to use this option to meet the CRNNS English language proficiency requirement you must ask your

employer(s) to complete the [Employer Confirmation of English Language Proficiency](#) affirming that you:

1. worked as a nurse for a minimum of 24 months immediately prior to your application to CRNNS; and,
2. there were no concerns with your nursing practice when you communicated (reading, writing, listening and speaking) with clients and members of the interdisciplinary team in English.

Option #4: Show that you have met the English language proficiency requirements of another Canadian nursing regulatory body (licensed practical nurse or registered psychiatric nurse) and hold a licence to practice nursing with that regulatory body for the current licensure year.

You will be required to provide verification of current licensure with the other Canadian licensed practical nurse or registered practical nurse regulatory body. CRNNS may contact the regulatory body to confirm that you met their English language proficiency requirement.

Expiry of the English Language Proficiency Test

Your English Language Proficiency Test results will expire two years from the date you complete the test. If your test results expire prior to you becoming registered with CRNNS, your file may be placed on hold until an updated test is received. You will not be permitted to do the following if your file is placed on hold:

1. Receive a temporary licence; or,
2. Register/licence with CRNNS

You are responsible to monitor the expiry of your test results.

There is an exception to this rule. Once your test scores expire you may exempt from providing an updated language proficiency test score if you can provide evidence, to the satisfaction of CRNNS, that you meet one of other options listed above.

If you have any questions about any of these options, please email ien@crnns.ca.

NNAS and English Language Proficiency

An applicant's English language proficiency is determined during the NNAS process and CRNNS as the regulatory body **does not** intervene in this initial process. This means that if NNAS determines that you are not proficient in English, you will be required to submit an English language test to NNAS. CRNNS cannot "waive" this NNAS English language proficiency test requirement. Once you apply to CRNNS the above rules related to English language proficiency apply.

CRNNS Member Services and Benefits

Being a member of CRNNS means having access to a number of services and benefits.

As a member, you have access to a number of unique services including:

- **Consultation Services:** One of our most personal and individualized resources we have for you is our confidential consultation services. Available daily, our experienced Practice Consultants are available to help you explore professional practice questions or issues that may need an objective nursing viewpoint.
- **Publications and Resources:** We have over 140 publications and resources including professional practice guidelines, position and policy statements, Q&As and more. All of our publications and resources are online and are written to help support your nursing practice.
- **Online Learning:** Our online learning offers you an opportunity to explore topics relevant to the nursing profession.
- **Workshops and Education Sessions:** Throughout the year, we provide workshops on specialized topic areas. We also provide free education sessions on topics related to your professional practice to help support you in meeting your standards of practice and professional obligations as an RN or NP.

On top of the services CRNNS offers internally, CRNNS registration and licensure provides you with a number of benefits, including:

MEMBERSHIP COMPONENT	MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT
Right to practise nursing in Nova Scotia and are eligible to use the title “Registered Nurse”, “RN”, “nurse”, “R.N.” or “Reg.N”	As a highly competent and trusted health professional, you are able to apply your education, skills and training to deliver safe, competent, ethical and compassionate care to Nova Scotians.
Eligible for election on the CRNNS Council	You can sit at the decision-making table for CRNNS and be a strong voice and leader within the healthcare system.
Receive liability protection through the Canadian Nurses Protective Society (CNPS)	On top of having liability protection in your practice, you have important services at your fingertips including legal advice, risk management and legal assistance at no added cost.
Receive membership to the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA)	As a member of a national professional association, you have a voice in the work of CNA, including public policy, public awareness and the role of the nurse. It also provides you with professional development opportunities and practice resources.
Eligible to be appointed to any CRNNS Committee	You have the ability to engage in your profession, make decisions, develop new skills and interact with fellow colleagues as a member of a CRNNS Committee. Based on your competencies and interests, there are many different committees with different levels of responsibility and commitment to be a part of.
Receive CRNNS publications and the Canadian Nursing Association’s publication called “The Canadian Nurse”	You have access to important, relevant and timely nursing resources to incorporate into your nursing practice when appropriate and are tools to use to continuously improve your nursing competence.

MEMBERSHIP COMPONENT	MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT
Eligible to be a voting delegate at the CRNNS Annual General Meeting (AGM)	You have a voice and the opportunity to provide feedback and inform the work of CRNNS and its governing Council.

Partnerships

The CRNNS, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre (RNPDC) work together to assist you in establishing community integration and nursing employment in Nova Scotia.

Together, we are committed to providing you with information and resources that we hope will help you settle in Nova Scotia and move you forward with your nursing career, specifically to determine what you must do to qualify to practise as an RN in this province.

Through our partnership, we have a number of resources available for internationally educated nurses, including:

[Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia \(ISANS\)](#): ISANS is a leading community organization that welcomes immigrants. Working in partnership, ISANS offers services and creates opportunities that enable immigrants to participate fully in Canadian life.

- English Language Assessment and Healthcare Language Programs (ISANS)
- Mentorship/other support programs (ISANS)

[Registered Nurses Professional Development Centre \(RN-PDC\)](#): The mission of RN-PDC is to deliver performance-based and continuing competency education for health professionals.

- Orientation to the Canadian healthcare system (RNPDC)
- Competence assessments (RNPDC)
- Professional support courses (RNPDC)
- RN Bridging/Re-Entry Nursing Program (RNPDC)
- NCLEX-RN guidance and study strategies (RNPDC)
- Transition Program (RNPDC)

Contact Us

If you have any additional questions not found in this guide or on our website, please contact our Registration Department.

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