



On May 18, 2023, NSCN held its 2023 Annual Meeting with a record breaking 356 participants registered for the event. Every year, the NSCN Board includes a dedicated 'Discussion Period' in the meeting agenda with an opportunity for meeting participants to raise questions about the NSCN Annual Report and other regulatory matters. While we endeavour to respond to all questions raised, this is not always possible in the time allotted. As a result, we have created this Q&A document that answers all questions asked during the 2023 NSCN Annual Meeting.

A special thank you to all those who joined us for the meeting and for the thought-provoking questions we are pleased to respond to below.

**1. Why didn't NSCN call for Resolutions this year?**

Last fall, NSCN held a public consultation on proposed by-law amendments relating to resolutions at NSCN Annual Meetings. The NSCN Board reviewed annual meeting processes of other regulators in Nova Scotia and Canada and identified opportunities to evolve NSCN By-laws to reflect current best practice.

By-law 25 (Resolutions) and all associated By-laws referencing resolutions at NSCN Annual Meetings were removed. The new By-laws evolve the annual meeting processes ending the practice of considering resolutions at the annual meeting, which is an association practice.

All practicing registrants have the option of submitting resolutions at any time during the year for consideration at a Board General Meeting, which means registrants do not need to wait for the annual meeting.

The revised By-laws allow for greater consistency with NSCN's regulatory public protection mandate and move away from an outdated process remaining from the former association model.

**2. NP representation is important. Can you tell me why it's not a requirement to have an NP on the NSCN Board? Do you have plans in place to involve more NPs in the work you do?**

NSCN is a regulatory body that is here for the public of Nova Scotia. NSCN does not represent or advocate for nurses – this is the role of associations and unions.

Government set out the requirement in the Nursing Act to have at least one RN and at least one LPN on the NSCN Board, recognizing that all NPs are also RNs. The Board made the decision that apart from the requirements in the Nursing Act, there would be no other seats designated to a specific type of nurse. This is because all nurses, regardless of their designation, are required to sit on the board to represent the public interest, not the interest of their specific nursing designation.

When recruiting for new Board members, we issue an open call for volunteers. All nurses are encouraged to put their names forward for Board and regulatory committee positions. This year, an NP did apply. As the only candidate for the Board vacancy, the NP was appointed to the Board by acclamation.

**3. Does NSCN's new registration and licensure process for international nurses in seven designated countries mean the College is lowering its standards?**

Absolutely not. We take our commitment to the public seriously and the Nova Scotians are at the heart of all decisions we make. For clarity, every applicant must still meet NSCN's registration and licensing requirements – which have not changed.



NSCN was able to expedite the registration and licensure process for international nurses in good standing from seven designated countries – the Philippines, India, Nigeria, USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand – based on the extensive knowledge we have gained from nurses who come from these countries. The majority of our international applicants have traditionally come from these countries and we have a vast amount of information that we have studied over the past 10 years. This includes:

- National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) Advisory Reports
- Their nationalized curriculum
- Their entry-level competencies
- Their success rates on the entry-to-practice exam (NCLEX-RN or CPNRE exam).

As Nova Scotia’s nursing regulator, we are confident that nurses who meet the registration and licensure requirements in one of these seven specific countries have the necessary educational preparation and foundation to safely practice in the RN scope of practice required in Nova Scotia.

#### **4. I am a nurse in Nigeria and have applied to be licenced in Nova Scotia. I have not had a response to my application. How long I should wait to learn what is happening? Also, will you help my family immigrate to Canada?**

Thank you for submitting your application and for your patience as we work to address the thousands of applications we have received. While the response to our new process has been significant, we want to assure all applicants that the NSCN team is working hard to manage the information we have received to date.

In addition to the applications that have been submitted, NSCN has received thousands of emails and phone calls asking for information. In some cases, we are receiving multiple questions and repeat inquiries from the same individual. Unfortunately, this slows down our ability to respond to everybody so we encourage applicants to please be patient and wait to hear from a member of the NSCN team.

It is important to note that an NSCN licence is not a work permit/visa. NSCN is not involved in the immigration process, or other processes such as helping international nurses obtain or change a work permit/visa, the Provincial Nominee Program, or sponsorship. You are responsible to start the immigration process so you can legally work in Nova Scotia. We encourage you to contact:

- Nova Scotia Immigration: <https://novascotiainmigration.com/>
- Canadian Immigration and Citizenship: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html>

The Nova Scotia’s International Community of Health Workers Engagement (NICHE) program at Nova Scotia Health has also launched a survey for international applicants that will help match you to comprehensive immigration, settlement, and employment supports in Nova Scotia that are tailored to your specific needs. Take the survey [here](#).

Read our detailed [FAQ resource](#) that was created specifically to help answer questions about this licensure process.

#### **5. You mentioned that you were doing an equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) survey of registrants. Why are you collecting this type of personal information and how will it be used?**

We are collecting this EDI information for two purposes:

- We want to ensure all nurses in Nova Scotia have the education, skills and confidence to provide culturally competent care to a diverse population of Nova Scotians.
- Understanding the demographic makeup of Nova Scotia’s nursing registrants will help us better understand how diverse the nursing workforce is in health care and identify any gaps or barriers that may exist to serving diverse populations.

We envision a nursing profession that is reflective of the community it serves and is seeking to remove barriers within the profession for members of equity-deserving groups. The feedback we receive from nurses

will be key in making this work as impactful as it needs to be for Nova Scotians.

Participation in the survey is voluntary and we hope nurses across the province will value the EDI work NSCN is involved in share their feedback with us.

**6. I am looking at your financial statements. Why is there such a large loss on investments?**

As per NSCN Board policies, NSCN invests in very low risk quality bonds and mutual funds. Bond markets decline in value as interest rates rise, a trend that has been seen in the investment market over the past year.

Given NSCN’s investment portfolio is weighted heavily in bonds we recorded losses, similar to many other organizations with similar investment portfolios. We do however expect the markets and our investments to slowly return to pre-pandemic levels over the coming months.

**7. When is NSCN going to include internationally educated nurses (IENs) from other countries to register through the same process that the selected seven countries do? Isn’t excluding the other IENs from other countries going to ultimately reduce the numbers from those countries and be discriminatory?**

*Please note: similar variations of this question were submitted multiple times during the Annual Meeting. For efficiency purposes, NSCN has responded with one answer below.*

Statistics show that the majority of international nurse applicants seeking a licence in Nova Scotia come from the seven designated countries – the Philippines, India, Nigeria, USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand. As a result, there has been a significant amount of data for NSCN to confidently base its decision. We do not have the same volume of evidence for nursing education programs and the RN scope of practice for other jurisdictions at this time. Consideration will be made to adding more countries as data becomes available.

**8. I am looking at NSCN’s Statement of Operations, Financial Statements – page three. Please expand a little and provide examples of NSCN’s 2022 expenditures – administrative, legislated services, and registrant services.**

Each year the NSCN Board uses an external, independent financial firm to review NSCN’s financial statements and prepare an auditor’s report. The financial statements and auditor’s report presented to registrants and the public are the same documents that are reviewed by the NSCN Board. The audit is prepared in accordance with industry standard, which means they include a level of detail that allows the reader to understand the areas in which the organization generates revenue and the areas in which it spends funds. The financial statements are prepared so that the Board, public, registrants and other stakeholders may review the financial position of NSCN.

Page three of the financial statements in NSCN’s 2022 Annual report provides details as to where NSCN receives its funds, which is mainly from licensing fees and other registration related fees. Page three also provides details as to how NSCN spends those funds.

In 2022, NSCN distributed fees across three main areas of operation. Most notably, we spent the majority of fees on our registrant services in accordance with the Nursing Act and our mandate of public protection.

While there are five areas noted in the financial statements on page three, we report it as three areas in the table below, with ‘Operations and Administration’ reflecting administrative, premises and amortization expenditures.

Area	Percentage of Fees	Examples
Legislative	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board Governance</li><li>• Nursing Act Legislation</li><li>• Complaints and Concerns</li><li>• Education Program Approval</li><li>• Registration and Licensing</li></ul>

Registrant	43%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Support Tools</li> <li>• Standards of Practice</li> <li>• NP Regulatory Framework</li> <li>• RN Prescribing Initiative</li> <li>• Customer Experience</li> <li>• Website and Communications</li> <li>• Professional Liability Protection</li> </ul>
Operations & Administrative	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Information Technology Systems</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Maintenance</li> <li>• Office Administration</li> <li>• Property Lease</li> <li>• File Storage Infrastructure</li> </ul>

Please access the 2022 Auditor’s Report here in our [2022 Annual Report](#).

**9. How long does it take to review initial applications for the new expedited process?**

Our team is working as quickly as possible to respond to the significant number of applications and inquiries we have received. Please see our response to question four noted above. The overall goal is to reduce the process timeline from years/months to a matter of weeks.

**10. Are there any updates on RN Prescribing legislation in NS?**

RN prescribing came into effect in January 2022. There are currently 15 RN prescribers in the Nova Scotia health care system. The RN prescribing program is offered through Dalhousie University and the next intake is September 2023.

There have not been any recent legislative changes concerning RN prescribing.

**11. I misunderstood that we have to send all the supporting licensure documents only after NSCN reviews my application. I already submitted my criminal record check (CRC) and the Indian Nursing Board has sent my verification of registration (VOR) too. Can NSCN save those documents or do I have to send again? If so, do I have to pay to send again?**

NSCN can save these documents and you will not be required to send them again.

**12. Has NSCN started validating applications for the new expedited licensure process?**

Yes. We have received over 12,000 applications, and we are processing them as quickly as we can. We ask for your patience as we work through the significant number of applications and associated information received.

**13. Interesting conversation on internationally educated nurses (IENs). If they fail the NCLEX-RN exam, what happens to them? Is there something in place to enable them to get educated and licensed?**

Most international nurses will be eligible for a conditional licence if they have not yet passed the NCLEX-RN, the national entry-to-practice exam. They can have a conditional licence for up to 12 months or until they fail the NCLEX-RN three times. The applicant cannot practice after the third failure. This is the case for all NSCN applicants.

Applicants can choose to continue to write the NCLEX-RN exam after the third failure. However, we would strongly encourage them to consider completing bridging education before attempting the exam again. Passing the NCELX-RN is a requirement for RN licensure.

- 14. I am a nurse in the Philippines and I am interested in applying for a licence with NSCN. I just want to clarify some pointers here: 1. What would be the first step to process the application for licensure? 2. How much would be the total cost to receive licensure?**

Information on the entire [registration and licensure process](#) for international nurses is available on the NSCN website. You will also find a detailed [Frequently Asked Questions](#) resource with information about the process and fees.