

NCLEX[®] *Communiqué*



WINTER 2013

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of the NCLEX[®] Communiqué! The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN[®]) is pleased to begin our collaboration with the nurse regulatory bodies of Canada and all relevant stakeholders in providing an independent, objective, competence assessment examination (NCLEX-RN[®] Examination) for the purpose of licensure decision making. It is the intention of this communiqué to provide information in an open and transparent manner during this implementation transition.

This communiqué will provide a plethora of information, including timelines showing the progress towards implementation of the NCLEX-RN, highlight milestones along the way and clarify terminology. It will also provide information on the ongoing process of maintaining a high stakes, psychometrically sound, legally defensible, and secure computerized adaptive competence assessment. The communiqué will notify all stakeholders about upcoming educational opportunities and responses to frequently asked questions.

We value collaboration and welcome your feedback and input to make this a successful communiqué!

Kathy Apple, MS, RN, FAAN
CEO, NCSBN

 **NCSBN**
National Council of State Boards of Nursing



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The NCLEX-RN® Exam Coming to Canada in 2015

Ensuring nurses entering the profession in Canada have the competencies to practice safely is essential to protecting the public and ensuring that nursing remains a trusted and respected profession in the eyes of the public.

One of the roles of Canada's nursing regulators is to make decisions about the requirements for entering the nursing profession. The RN exam, the final requirement for becoming a nurse, is a critical assessment of an applicant's ability to practise safely in the first six months of practice.

What does this mean to Canadian regulators? It means the exam should accurately measure, using evidence and sound methodology, an applicant's ability to apply nursing knowledge, critical thinking and skills to the situations that they typically experience in the first six months of practice. It should be a valid assessment, in that it is psychometrically sound and legally defensible as an entry exam for Canadian applicants. It should be secure, evidence-based and only test those competencies that are needed to enter the profession.

To meet the needs of applicants who increasingly come with high expectations for technology and quick feedback on their performance, we want an exam that uses technology to allow applicants enhanced access to write the exam, efficiently tests only those competencies that are required to enter the profession and provides results quickly.



Regulators also know that Canadian educators need information and support to help them understand the connection between nursing program curriculum and a regulatory exam.

Following an extensive business process, including a call for proposals from exam providers, 10 members of the Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators (CCRNRR)* chose the NCLEX-RN exam. This exam is administered by NCSBN, an organization with a proven track-record of developing and administering computerized adaptive exams successfully. It also has a proven record in providing education to help educators understand the correlation between nursing program curriculum and the test plan and exam.

**Other than the Yukon Registered Nurses Association and L'Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec.*

Spotlight on NCLEX® Terminology

Each issue of the NCLEX® Communiqué will highlight the meaning of a handful of NCLEX terminologies. The goal of this column is to provide Canadian educators, regulators and nursing students with the information they need to understand the NCLEX process.

This issue focuses on the processes used to inform the NCLEX Test Plan and NCLEX item development.

Practice Analysis

Studies that assist NCSBN in developing a valid test plan reflective of entry-level RN practice. Results of these studies guide content distribution of the licensure examination by analyzing entry-level RN practice. A number of steps are necessary to perform an analysis of newly licensed registered nurse (RN) practice. A panel of subject matter experts (SMEs) is assembled and a list of RN activities is created and incorporated into a survey. The survey is sent to a randomly drawn sample of newly licensed RNs, and data are then collected and analyzed in order to evaluate possible changes to the NCLEX Test Plan.

Activity Statements

Individual tasks that entry-level nurses perform on the job. The list of activity statements for the NCLEX-RN exam is developed by the Practice Analysis SME Panel for use on the practice analysis survey.

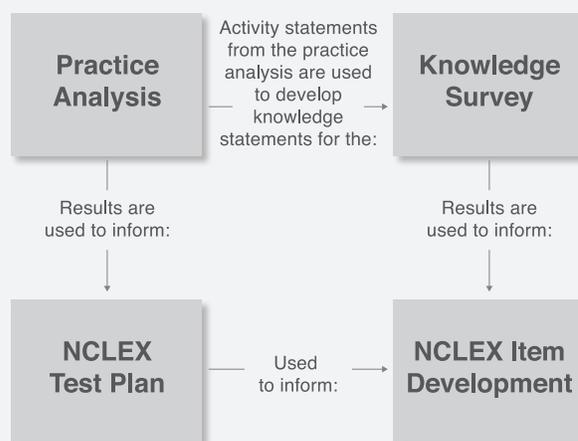
Knowledge Studies

In conjunction with the triennial practice analyses, NCSBN conducts a study to identify the knowledge needed by entry-level nurses. The study includes knowledge statements that are developed for each activity statement used on the practice analysis. The results of this study are used for NCLEX item development.



Knowledge Statements

The individual knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform entry-level nursing activity/tasks laid out in the practice analysis.



The NCSBN website includes free downloadable copies of [practice analyses](#) and [knowledge studies](#).

NCLEX-RN® Webinars for Canadian Educators

In December 2012, CCRNR and NCSBN presented two webinars on the NCLEX-RN exam; the first webinar was provided in English, the second in French. The webinars provided:

- An overview of the role of regulatory examinations;
- Information on why the NCLEX was selected for Canadian RN entry to practice;
- An introduction to the elements of computerized adaptive testing and NCLEX development; and
- Information on how students and educators can prepare for the NCLEX in 2015.

Both webinars are available to view at any time on the [NCSBN Past Webinars](#) webpage.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do the Entry-to-Practice (ETP) competencies in Canada relate to the items that will be on the NCLEX?

The NCLEX-RN is based on data collected from the practice analysis studies conducted every three years. NCSBN conducted background research on nursing practice in the U.S. and Canada, which included a comparison of the Canadian ETP competencies with the entry-level nursing activity statements as used in the RN practice analysis. Study results revealed a high degree of correspondence between Canadian ETP competencies and RN entry-level nursing activity statements. Additionally, NCSBN conducted practice analysis verification studies in collaboration with the College of Nurses of Ontario and the College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia. Study results indicated that entry-level practice characteristics among the U.S., Ontario and British Columbia are highly similar. Full reports for the Ontario and British Columbia studies are available on the [Exams Publications](#) page of the NCSBN website.



Before sitting for the NCLEX-RN, nursing students complete an educational program that teaches them the knowledge, skills and abilities that will prepare them to enter the nursing profession. Nursing candidates' academic preparation provides a starting point for them to practice in a variety of settings. The NCLEX-RN is developed to assess whether nursing candidates possess the minimal entry-level competence to provide safe and effective care in these practice settings.

Does the NCLEX assess components related to community health?

NCLEX-RN items are developed based on health care settings in which entry-level RNs practice. These settings include acute/critical care, long-term/rehabilitation care, outpatient care and community-based/home care.

Each item development subject matter expert panel is carefully assembled to ensure that a diverse group of nurses are represented. These panels include item writing, item review, practice analysis and every other panel along the test development process. NCSBN pays attention to demographic characteristics, such as geographical areas, gender, practice settings and nursing specialties, to name a few. Community-based nursing practice, along with other nurse practice settings, are selected to ensure comprehensive representation in the overall test development process.

Community health concepts, including social determinants of health and the care of populations, are incorporated throughout the test plan categories and the items that are subsequently developed based on these categories. The entry-to-practice exam focuses on the validation of required entry-to-practice competencies and is not intended as a comprehensive validation of the acquisition of program content.

How will the NCLEX be translated?

In order to meet the needs of French-speaking Canadian NCLEX-RN candidates, NCSBN will offer the NCLEX-RN exam in French. NCSBN will translate two operational item pools each year. Following this forward translation by a translation professional with expertise in Canadian French, NCSBN will work with Canadian regulatory bodies to identify a Canadian Translation Panel. The panel will consist of three nurses proficient in English and French who will review each translated item for accuracy and contextual equivalency. This method, referred to as a mixed method, process oriented approach, is supported in the literature as a preferred method for ensuring construct equivalence in health care measurement instruments.

Following the Canadian Translation Panel's approval, the French NCLEX operational pool will be administered to French Canadian NCLEX-RN candidates. Once sufficient candidate response data is obtained, the items will be subject to a separate differential item functioning (DIF) analysis to ascertain whether the items appropriately measure candidates' nursing ability irrespective of the language in which these test items were administered. Items identified as possessing DIF will be reviewed by the NCLEX DIF panel for presence of bias. In addition to the construct equivalence confirmed by the Canadian Translation Panel, the use of DIF analysis is supported in the literature as a preferred method to ensure measurement equivalence.

Timeline

2012

Summer

Contracts signed
Transition team established

Fall

NCLEX Item Development Volunteer Application made available to Canadian nurses
Begin dialogue with educators and other stakeholders to produce materials to assist in using the test plan to aid in curriculum review
Transition plan established

2013

Winter

Begin quarterly communication on the status of the transition processes
Schedule future meetings/trainings with Canadian nurse educators and nurse regulation staff
Canadian item writers included in item writing workshops
Canadian item reviewers included in item review workshops

Fall

Canadian RN experts added to the NCLEX-RN subject matter experts (SMEs)

2014

Spring

NCLEX Administration Website activated for Canadian nurse regulators
Canadian nurse regulators join item review process
French translation of the NCLEX Candidate Bulletin available
French translation of the NCLEX Computerized Adaptive Testing Tutorial available

Fall

Canadian representative sample added to the continuous RN practice analysis methodology
Initial translation of NCLEX-RN item pool into French
Perform alpha test and privacy impact analysis of delivery of NCLEX-RN in Canadian test centers
NCLEX Candidate Website activated for Canadian candidate registrations
NCLEX Candidate Call Center activated for Canadian candidates
SMEs review operational NCLEX-RN pool

2015

Winter

Canadian test centers activated

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