

**Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing**  
Advisory Ruling

**Title:** Educational Requirements for Licensure Applicants Educated in an Out of State Nursing Program

**Advisory Ruling (AR) Number:** 23-02

**Authority:** The Massachusetts (MA) Board of Registration in Nursing (Board) is created and authorized by MA General Laws (M.G.L.) c. 13, §§ 13, 14, 14A, 15 and 15D, and G.L. c. 112, §§ 74 through 81C to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth through the regulation of nursing practice and education. In addition, M.G.L. c.30A, § 8 authorizes the Board to make advisory rulings with respect to the applicability to any person, property, or state of facts of any statute or regulation enforced or administered by the Board. Each nurse is required to practice in accordance with accepted standards of practice and is responsible and accountable for his or her nursing judgments, actions, and competency. The Board's regulation at 244 CMR 9.03(6) requires all nurses to comply with any other law and regulation related to licensure and practice.

**Date Issued:** March 15, 2023

**Scope of Practice:** Out of State Applicants for Registered Nurse (RN) or Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Licensure

**Purpose:** To guide individuals educated outside of MA when applying for registered nurse or licensed practical nurse licensure by exam or by reciprocity. This AR specifically pertains to the educational requirements. There are additional eligibility requirements that can be found on our website at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-nursing-licensure-by-exam>.

**Advisory:** Individuals may apply for the following license types:

- LPN license by exam
- LPN license by reciprocity
- RN license by exam
- RN license by reciprocity

All applicants, including applicants licensed in another jurisdiction, must meet the regulatory requirements for MA licensure eligibility including, but not limited to, the educational criteria in order to be licensed.

The Board's Regulations [244 CMR 8.00](#) Licensure Requirements state that: Initial Licensure by Examination or Reciprocity requires graduation from an approved nursing education program.

As applied in 244 CMR 8.00: Licensure Requirements, **eligibility** means the Board's determination of an applicant's ability to write the NCLEX based on criteria specified in M.G.L. c. 112, §§ 74 and 74A.

Criteria:

- a. Graduated from a Board approved nursing program
- b. Are of Good Moral Character, as defined by MA state law
- c. Have passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX)
- d. Have a valid Social Security number

The following education related documents are required and must be sent directly to the Board from the program:

- Certificate of Graduation (COG) signed by the program administrator.
- Original transcript verifying date of graduation and the degree conferred.
- If the applicant is a graduate of a program not located in the United States, the District of Columbia, a US Territory, or Canada, the applicant's graduate status shall be certified by the Board or its designee by the applicant's receipt of a Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) certificate and a CGFNS credentials review or other Board-designated credentials review.
- If the language of instruction was not English, the applicant must achieve a required minimum cut score on Board-designated Tests of English Proficiency as specified by the Board.

It is the Board's opinion that the initial submitted documents identified above for licensure are the final documents. Revised documents will only be accepted if the following criteria is met:

- Certificate of Graduation (COG): revisions will only be accepted if accompanied by evidence acceptable to the Board, substantiating the justification for the change.

Former students of an approved nursing education program for RNs may apply for LPN licensure:

- If the applicant was a graduate of or a former student at an approved nursing education program for Registered Nurses or withdrew from such program in good standing and, as of the applicant's withdrawal date, had completed a program of study, theory, and clinical practice equivalent to that required for graduation from an approved nursing education program for Practical Nurses. The applicant shall arrange for the following items to be sent directly to the Board from the program as proof satisfactory to the Board of completion of such equivalent program:

1. Certification by the program administrator of completion of a program of study, theory, and clinical practice equivalent to that required for graduation from an approved nursing education program for Practical Nurses; and
2. An original transcript from the Registered Nurse education program either:
  - indicating the date that the nursing degree was conferred for the applicant who completed a nursing education program; or
  - verifying the date of withdrawal of the applicant who withdrew in good standing.

### Definitions:

1. Applicant: An individual who seeks initial licensure or the renewal of licensure from the Board, as a Registered Nurse or as a Licensed Practical Nurse, or who seeks initial APRN authorization or renewal of APRN authorization.
2. Application: The signed application is an attestation that certifies, under pains and penalties of perjury that all information is true.
3. Approved Nursing Education Program means a nursing education program for Registered Nurses or Practical Nurses, as applicable, located in Massachusetts and approved by the Board pursuant to [244 CMR 6.00](#), or a nursing education program located outside Massachusetts which, in the opinion of the Board, maintains **standards substantially the same** as those required for approval of a nursing education program in Massachusetts *and* which program is approved by the nursing board or corresponding body in the jurisdiction where the program is located.
4. Board Recognized Accrediting Agency in Nursing: An accreditation entity that appraises nursing education programs using criteria the Board deems consistent with 244 CMR 6.04: Standards for Nursing Education Program Approval and which is recognized by the United States Department of Education or other Board-recognized entity.
  - a. Accrediting Agency in Nursing.
    - i. Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN)
    - ii. Collegiate Nursing education (CCNE)
    - iii. National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (NLN CNEA)
5. Nursing license by reciprocity: An LPN or RN licensed in another jurisdiction obtaining licensure in MA.
6. Nursing license by exam: A graduate of an accredited school and approved nursing educational successfully writing the NCLEX RN or NCLEX PN.
7. Parent Institution: The organization with the legal authority to operate a nursing education program. Accreditation by a nationally recognized accrediting body.
8. Parent Institution Accreditation: The formal recognition or acceptance of the parent institution by a regional or professional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education or other Board recognized entity.

9. Simulation: A technique, not a technology, to replace or amplify real experiences with guided experiences that evoke or replicate substantial aspects of the real world in a fully interactive manner (NCSBN, 2016).
10. Traditional Clinical Experience: Practice in an inpatient, ambulatory care or community setting where the student provides care to patients under the guidance of an instructor or preceptor (NCSBN, 2016).

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> Code of Massachusetts Regulations. Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing. 244 CMR 6.00 Approval of nursing education programs. Retrieved at <https://www.mass.gov/regulations/244-CMR-600-approval-of-nursing-education-programs-and-the-general-conduct-thereof>
  - <sup>2</sup> Code of Massachusetts Regulations. Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing. 244 CMR 8.00 Licensure requirements. Retrieved at <https://www.mass.gov/regulations/244-CMR-800-licensure-requirements>
  - <sup>3</sup> Code of Massachusetts Regulations. Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing. 244 CMR 9.00 Standards of conduct. Retrieved at <https://www.mass.gov/regulations/244-CMR-900-standards-of-conduct-for-nurses>
  - <sup>4</sup> Code of Massachusetts Regulations. Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing. 244 CMR 10.00 Definitions and severability. Retrieved at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/244-cmr-1000-definitions-and-severability/download>
  - <sup>5</sup> NCSBN. (2016). National Simulation Guidelines for Prelicensure Nursing Education Programs. Retrieved from <https://www.ncsbn.org/null/null/national-simulation-guidelines> .
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