



## FOREIGN EDUCATED NURSES

### PART 1

#### Qualifications for Licensure in Iowa (IAC 655-3.3; see also Iowa Code Section 147.3 and 152.7)

- Applicants must have passed the exam for licensure and have been licensed in the country in which they were educated. A valid license/registration must be held in the original country. If you have NOT been licensed in the country in which you were educated, you do NOT meet the qualifications for Iowa RN/LPN licensure.
- Applicants MUST provide a **Social Security Number**. If a Social Security Number (SSN) is **not** available, the applicant will need to submit the documentation that allows the individual access to the United States (for example, U.S. Visa). **Without an SSN you will be issued a single state license.**
- Foreign educated nurses are not eligible to receive a temporary license.
- Applicants MUST apply for the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) Professional report through CGFNS.com. CGFNS must submit one of the following directly to the Iowa Board of Nursing:
  1. Verification of certificate letter to document completion of the certificate program.
  2. Professional Report of the CGFNS Credentials Evaluation Service (CES), or Full Education Course-By-Course Report.
- An English Proficiency test must be completed in addition to the CES Professional Report:  
Submit documentation from the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE), or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

However, applicants shall be exempt from the IELTS, PTE or TOEFL examination when ALL of the following are met:

- The native language is English
- Nursing education was completed in a college, university or professional school located in Australia, Barbados, Canada (except Quebec), Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, or the United Kingdom
- Language of instruction in the nursing program was English
- Language of the textbooks in the nursing program was English

Contact information for CGFNS:

Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools    Customer Service:  
ATTN: CES Professional Report                                    Telephone: 215-222-8454  
3600 Market Street, Suite 400  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2651 USA                                    CGFNS Website: [www.cgfns.org](http://www.cgfns.org)

The CGFNS Professional Report replaces the requirement of the school of nursing to submit the transcript directly to the Board of Nursing. **Do not request the school to send your transcript to the Iowa Board of Nursing.**

**If the full education course-by-course report requirements or the Professional Report of the CGFNS Credentials Evaluation Service (CES) has been completed**, apply for the Re-evaluation of a Full Education Course-by-Course Report or the Professional Report to be submitted to the Iowa Board of Nursing.

**If the certificate program was completed through CGFNS**, apply for the Verification of Certificate letter to be submitted to the Iowa Board of Nursing.

## PART 2 INSTRUCTIONS FOR LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT FOR FOREIGN EDUCATED NURSES

**Please note: If you have previously held a license in Iowa and are applying for the same level of license, you must reactivate that license; you are not eligible for endorsement.** E-mail [ibon@iowa.gov](mailto:ibon@iowa.gov) or telephone 515-281-3264 to obtain the appropriate forms to **reactivate** your previously held Iowa license.

### **Qualifications for Licensure in Iowa (IAC 655-3.3; see also Iowa Code Section 147.3 and 152.7)**

1. Applicants must have held similar licensure in another state prior to applying for licensure in Iowa.
2. The board may consider the past criminal record of an applicant or a record of prior disciplinary action, regardless of jurisdiction.
3. Passing the NCLEX examination as prescribed by the board.

**Please note:** If you hold a multi-state license in a state that is a member of the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC), you may continue to practice on a current compact license; however, we recommend completion of your licensure by endorsement within 90 days after your move to Iowa and you declare Iowa as your primary state of residence. **If you have an active single state license in a non-compact state, or an active single state license in state where the NLC legislation is in effect, you may not practice until you have your license.**

### **CHECKING THE STATUS OF AN APPLICATION**

You can check the status of your application through IBON Online Services, which can be accessed 24/7 through our website, <https://nursing.iowa.gov>. However, **materials will not display online until they are reviewed and logged by staff, which may require up to 8 weeks depending on the application volume and when the fingerprint cards have been received.**

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

***NOTE: The application process must be completed twelve (12) months from the date the application has been initiated. After the 12 month period, the application will be archived and all other required documents may be destroyed. Once the application is archived, the applicant will be required to reapply, repay the application fee and may be required to resubmit documents.***

After the requirements set forth in Part I have been met, the endorsement application can be filed. The following items are required in order to apply for an Iowa nursing license by endorsement:

1. A completed application.
  - a. If you hold a Social Security Number, you may apply online. Go to the board's website at <https://nursing.iowa.gov>, and follow the links to IBON Online Services. The link to the endorsement application is located in the main menu on the Online Services page. A packet of other required materials and instructions will be sent to you automatically by ground mail after you have completed the online application and paid the endorsement fee.
  - b. If you do not hold a social security number, call the Board office at 515-281-3255 and request a paper application.
2. Fee of \$169, which includes the fee to conduct the criminal history background check. Credit card payments are only accepted online. Paper applications must be accompanied by a United States issued personal or business check, money order or cashier's check that is made payable to the Iowa Board of Nursing.

**Important note: The fee is not refundable.**

3. Two completed fingerprint cards. These must be the cards received from the nursing board office; other fingerprint cards cannot be accepted. These will be mailed to you automatically if you apply online, or will be included in the packet if you are applying on paper. All paper applications will be returned if received without the fingerprint cards and signed waiver form (see #4). **All blanks on the fingerprint card must be filled in before they can be processed or they may be sent back which may delay the licensing process.**
4. A signed waiver form that allows the Iowa Board of Nursing to perform criminal background checks.
5. Information regarding any criminal offense(s) and out of state discipline must be submitted with the paper application and/or fingerprint cards. This information must include:
  - a. All necessary supporting documentation to review your criminal offenses in order for your application to be processed. The sentencing order or other legal documentation that shows the final disposition is needed.
  - b. A **brief** summary of the conditions that led to the charge(s) including date, location and outcome.
6. Verification of original license. Iowa only requires verification from your original state of licensure. Printing an online verification through a board of nursing website is not sufficient.

Apply online for original license verification at [www.nursys.com](http://www.nursys.com).

**Exceptions:** Some states will only accept a paper verification form and may charge a fee for their verification services. If you are endorsing from one of those states, you will need to send the "Verification of Original License" form from your packet, to your original state. Discard the form if it is not needed.

7. Active military or federal government employee identification, if applicable.

If you are currently (and will continue to be) an active member of the military or an employee of the federal government, you may be requested to submit a copy of military or federal identification, such as military orders, military or federal identification.

## **NAME OR ADDRESS CHANGES AFTER SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION**

If you need to change your name or address before your Iowa license is issued, you must submit the change to the attention of the endorsement division, Iowa Board of Nursing in writing, by fax to 515-281-4825, or by email to [endorse@iowa.gov](mailto:endorse@iowa.gov).

## **OTHER QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions about the paperwork or the process, please contact 515-281-4827 or email [endorse@iowa.gov](mailto:endorse@iowa.gov).

Revised 4/18