

**Iowa Board of Nursing**  
6200 Park Ave, Suite 100  
Des Moines, IA 50321  
515.281.3264  
E-Mail: [foreigneducated@iowa.gov](mailto:foreigneducated@iowa.gov)  
Website: [nursing.iowa.gov](http://nursing.iowa.gov)

**LICENSURE BY EXAMINATION  
CHECKLIST FOR THE FOREIGN EDUCATED NURSE**

***\*See instructions for more detailed information.\****

- Licensure or registration as a nurse in the country or U.S. territory of origin, current country or U.S. territory of residence, or country or U.S. territory where educated
- Legal presence in the United States (U.S.). For example:
  - Social security number
  - U.S. visa
  - U.S. green card
- One of the following documents from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS):
  - The Credentials Evaluation Service (CES) Report
  - Visa Screen certificate or certificate verification letter verifying that a Visa Screen was issued
  - Certification program CGFNS certificate or certificate verification letter verifying that a certification program CGFNS certificate was issued
- One of the following English Proficiency Tests.
  - International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
  - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
- Completed online Iowa Board of Nursing application (social security number required) or paper application with the required fee payment
- Application must include mailing address and residential address (see definitions on detailed instructions)
- Fee payment must be in US dollars. All other payments will be returned.
- Two completed fingerprint cards and signed criminal history background waiver form

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## **FOREIGN EDUCATED NURSES PART 1 - EXAM INSTRUCTIONS**

### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR LICENSURE IN IOWA**

(Iowa Administrative Code 655 IAC 3.3; see also Iowa Code 147.3 and 152.7.)

- Licensure or registration as a nurse in the country or U.S. territory of origin, current country or U.S. territory of residence, or country or U.S. territory where educated
- 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.**
- Applicants **MUST** apply for the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) Professional report through [CGFNS.com](http://CGFNS.com). CGFNS must submit **one of the following** directly to the Iowa Board of Nursing:
  1. The Credentials Evaluation Service (CES) Report
  2. Visa Screen certificate or certificate verification letter verifying that a Visa Screen was issued
  3. Certification program CGFNS certificate or certificate verification letter verifying that a certification program CGFNS certificate was issued
- An English Proficiency test must be completed in addition to the CES Professional Report:  
Submit documentation from the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

However, applicants shall be exempt from the IELTS 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  
ATTN: CES Professional Report  
3600 Market Street, Suite 400  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2651 USA

Customer Service:  
Telephone: 215.222.8454

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.**

## FOREIGN EDUCATED NURSES PART 2 - EXAM INSTRUCTIONS

### QUALIFICATIONS FOR LICENSURE IN IOWA

(Iowa Administrative Code 655 IAC 3.3; see also Iowa Code 147.3 and 152.7.)

1. Graduation from an approved RN or LPN nursing program as documented by CGFNS.
2. Passing the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX).
3. Board approval of an applicant with a criminal history or a record of prior disciplinary action, regardless of the jurisdiction.

**IMPORTANT: THIS IS A TWO-PART PROCESS.** The Iowa Board of Nursing (IBON) application for exam and NCLEX Registration are **both** required prior to receiving the Authorization to Test (ATT).

1. Complete the NCLEX registration and pay the fee of \$200 by one of the following methods:
  - Go online to [www.pearsonvue.com/nclex](http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex) then select register using your first, middle and last name.
  - Call 1.866.496.2539. (M-F from 7 AM – 7 PM CST)
2. Apply to the IBON (see below). **On the board application use the exact same name, address and e-mail as the one given on the NCLEX registration form.**
3. The IBON application for exam and the NCLEX registration will expire 90 days **after** you are authorized to test. These applications are valid for the dates indicated on the ATT. If your ATT expires, you will be required to re-submit **both applications** and both **fees**.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

**NOTE:** The application process must be completed within twelve (12) months from the date the application is 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 exam application can be submitted. The following items are required in order to obtain an Iowa nursing license by exam:**

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 click the link, "IBON Online Services" then click "Initial Applications" then "Apply for New License." If you do not hold a social security number, call the board office at 515.281.5535 or send an e-mail to [foreigneducated@iowa.gov](mailto:foreigneducated@iowa.gov) and request a paper application.
  - b. **Address of Record:** On the application, provide a **mailing** address where the IBON can send license information, including the license certificate and card. If it applies, provide a **residential** address if different than your mailing address. This is the address where you physically live.
2. Fee of \$143.00, which includes the fee to conduct the criminal history background check.  
**Important: The fee is not refundable. Fee payment must be in US dollars. All other payments will be returned.**
3. Paper documents (two fingerprint cards, criminal history background waiver form, and all criminal history documentation).
  - You must contact the IBON to request a packet of required documents with instructions to be sent to you by ground mail. Return all the following required completed documents together to the IBON.
    - a. Two completed fingerprint cards. These must be the cards you receive from the IBON; other fingerprint cards cannot be accepted. **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.**

- b. A signed criminal history background waiver form.
- c. Information regarding any criminal convictions and out of state discipline must be submitted. You **must report all** criminal convictions and out of state discipline you have received. For criminal convictions report: **What** crime you were convicted of or plead guilty to, **when** the final disposition occurred, and **where** this occurred. For some cases you may be asked to submit the plea of guilty and/or sentencing order with your application. To avoid potential delays, it is recommended you submit these records when you apply. Deferred judgments, expunged convictions, sealed records, and other forms of agreed dispositions must still be reported. You do not need to report traffic charges, but you must report operating while intoxicated convictions.

### **NCLEX TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS**

Pursuant to 655 Iowa Administrative Code, Nursing Board, individuals with disabilities may request special testing accommodations. Inquiries should be directed to the Iowa Board of Nursing as early as possible to expedite the approval process. You may call 515.281.5535 for additional information.

### **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 in writing to the attention of the IBON examination division by fax at 515.281.3264 or by email to [foreigneducated@iowa.gov](mailto:foreigneducated@iowa.gov). Please notify the board if you are an LPN who is applying for RN licensure when you submit a name change.

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

It may require up to 8 weeks to process your application depending on the application volume and when the fingerprint cards, waiver form and transcript have been received. You may e-mail the exam staff at [foreigneducated@iowa.gov](mailto:foreigneducated@iowa.gov) to check the status of your application.

### **VERIFICATION OF IOWA LICENSURE FOLLOWING EXAMINATION**

If you passed the examination, you will receive your certificate in the mail. If you fail the NCLEX exam, you will be notified of your result by mail.

#### **Online License Verification Options:**

1. NCSBN at [www.nursys.com](http://www.nursys.com). Choose "QuickConfirm" license verification and follow the prompts.

### **QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions about the paperwork or the process, please call 515.281.5535 or email [foreigneducated@iowagov](mailto:foreigneducated@iowagov).

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