



FOR INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED NURSES: ELIGIBILITY & NEXT STEPS

Q&A ON CONDITIONAL LICENSURE AND RN EXAM (NCLEX)

The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by our registrants.

Contents

Overview	2
To Help You Decide	2
I Am Ready to Activate My Conditional Licence	5
I Am Ready to Take the NCLEX-RN Exam	5
I Am Not Ready to Get a Conditional Licence Right Now	5
Infographic	6

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CONGRATULATIONS!

You are eligible to apply for an RN conditional licence and to take the NCLEX-RN examination.

This document was developed to provide you with information to help you make the decisions that is best for your circumstance.

YOU HAVE OPTIONS!

You **do not need** to decide or act today. Take some time and consider the following four options to choose which one is best for you. You can:

1. Get a conditional licence *and* take the NCLEX-RN exam now.
2. Get a conditional licence now. Take the NCLEX-RN exam at a later date.
3. Take the NCLEX-RN exam now. Get a conditional licence at a later date.
4. Do nothing right now. Get a conditional licence *and* take the NCLEX-RN exam at a later date.

See the infographic at the end of this document for more information.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

The following are also for your consideration:

- A job offer from an employer in Nova Scotia or Canada is usually required to be eligible to immigrate to Canada.
- You are eligible for a conditional licence now. The conditional licence is not active, until you log into the Applicant Portal and pay the fee to activate it.
- Your conditional licence expires four months from the day you activate it.
- You do not need to activate your conditional licence to write the NCLEX-RN exam.
- Unless it is required for immigration purposes¹, you do not have to activate your conditional licence until you arrive in Canada.

Another Option

As an internationally educated registered nurse, you can choose to get licensed as an RN or LPN in Nova Scotia. Click [here](#) to read more about the differences in the scopes of practice of RNs and LPNs. Email registration@nscn.ca if you have questions about which category of nurse is best for you.

TO HELP YOU DECIDE

The following information can help you decide what option is best for you.

1. What is the difference between “eligible for a conditional licence” and “having or holding a conditional licence”?

- **Eligible for a conditional licence** means you meet the requirements to apply for a conditional licence.
- **Having or holding a conditional licence** means you have “activated” your licence by paying the licence fee.

¹ Processes may vary, so **please** verify this with your local immigration officials.

2. Do I need a conditional licence to start the immigration pathway to Nova Scotia?

- A job offer is usually required to start the immigration process.
- Being eligible for a conditional licence **may** be enough for immigration to grant you a work permit when you get a job offer².
- If this is the case, **you do not** have to activate your conditional licence until you arrive in Canada and are ready to begin working as a nurse.



3. If I choose to wait to activate my conditional licence, when will my eligibility for a conditional licence expire?

- If you are living in Canada, it expires 12 months from the date you were first made eligible by NSCN.
- If you are not living in Canada, it expires 12 months from the date you arrive in Canada to work.

4. When does my eligibility to write the NCLEX-RN exam expire?

- Your eligibility for the NCLEX-RN exam does not expire.

5. When do my application documents expire?

- The Verification of Registration (VOR) expires 24 months after the date it was issued.
- The Criminal Record Check (CRC) expires six months after it was issued.
- **We will work with you to find a reasonable solution if either of these documents expire before you can activate your conditional licence.**

6. How long are conditional licences valid?

- Once activated, a conditional licence is valid for four months from the date it was issued.

7. How many conditional licences can I have?

- You may be eligible to have up to three, four-month conditional licences for a maximum of 12 months.
- You are no longer eligible for a conditional licence if you fail the registration exam three times.

8. If I choose to activate my conditional licence now, what do I do when it is nearing its expiration date?

- **Two weeks before** your conditional licence expires, email registration@nscn.ca to request a renewal of your conditional licence.
- The team will provide you with instructions.
- You must activate your next conditional licence by logging in to the portal and paying the fee.

9. What do I do if my conditional licence expires, or I am no longer eligible for more conditional licences?

- If you are working in Nova Scotia, you must stop practising *and* notify your employer immediately.
- You may continue to write the NCLEX-RN and you may qualify for a practising licence when you pass.
- More details about conditions and restrictions on the conditional licence can be found [here](#).

² Processes may vary, so **please** verify this with your local immigration officials.

10. How many times can I write the NCLEX-RN exam?

- There is no limit to the number of times you can write the NCLEX-RN exam. You are not eligible to hold a conditional licence after the third failed attempt.

11. How long will it take me to receive my exam results?

- NCLEX-RN results are generally released within two weeks of taking the exam.

12. Do I need to notify my Nova Scotia employer that I have passed or failed the exam?

- Yes. You must immediately notify your Nova Scotia employer that you have passed or failed the registration exam.

13. How often can I write the NCLEX-RN exam?

- You may write the NCLEX-RN every 45 days.

14. Where can I take the NCLEX-RN exam?

- You can take the NCLEX-RN exam at any Pearson Vue Testing location offering the exam.

15. I have written the NCLEX-RN in the US or Australia. Do I need to re-write the exam for NSCN?

- No. NSCN accepts NCLEX-RN exam results written in the US and Australia.
- You must arrange for the regulatory body where you wrote the NCLEX-RN to send your results directly to

NCSN as we cannot accept them from you.

I AM READY TO ACTIVATE MY CONDITIONAL LICENCE

Step 1	Log in to the Applicant Portal .
Step 2	Click on 'My Invoices' and select the \$ next to the conditional licence fee (RN \$125.35).
Step 3	Review the invoice and click pay.
Step 4	Make sure your status has been updated to reflect the activated conditional licence.
Step 5	Click print to print your receipt.
Your conditional licence is valid for four months from this date.	

I AM READY TO TAKE THE NCLEX-RN EXAM

To get approval to take the NCLEX-RN exam, [called an Authorization to Test (ATT)] you must first apply and pay a fee to the exam vendor (Pearson Vue) and pay a fee to NCSN.

Things to consider before you begin:

- Fees are non-refundable
- When asked about your country of study and international initial entry to practice nursing program, **do not** include any program or education you may have completed in Canada

Step 1	Log in to the Applicant Portal .
Step 2	Click on 'My Invoices' and select the \$ next to the NCELX-RN fee (\$143.75).
Step 3	Review the invoice and click pay.
Step 4	Register to take the NCLEX-RN Exam with Pearson Vue . When the link opens, click on the Registration Process box.
Step 5	Click on the Register Online Now (or Already Registered link).
Step 6	Pay Pearson Vue fee.
Step 7	Schedule your exam when you receive the Authorization to Test (ATT).

I AM NOT READY TO GET A CONDITIONAL LICENCE RIGHT NOW

Everyone has their own timetable and circumstance. If you do not have an immigration pathway, waiting until things are in place makes good sense.

Things for you to consider:

- When you are ready to activate your licence, reach out to us at registration@nscn.ca and we will quickly review your application to ensure all your documents are still up to date.
- We will let you know when you can login to your portal to pay the invoice to activate your conditional licence.

YOUR APPLICATION HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR THE NEXT STEPS!

You can choose when to activate your conditional licence or start the registration exam process based on your individual circumstance. You have 4 options for next steps!

GET A CONDITIONAL LICENCE & APPLY TO TAKE THE EXAM NOW

This option is best for international nurses who:

- Have a job offer & an immigration pathway, **or**
- Are ready to practise as a nurse in Nova Scotia **and**
- Are ready to take the registration exam¹

- You must activate your conditional licence within 12 months from the date NSCN first made you eligible²
- Your conditional licence is activated when you pay for it
- Conditional licences are valid for 4 months and may be renewed within the 12-month eligibility period

- When you are ready to activate your conditional licence, log in to the [Applicant Portal](#) and pay the conditional licence invoice

GET A CONDITIONAL LICENCE NOW & TAKE THE EXAM LATER

This option is best for international nurses who:

- Have a job offer & an immigration pathway, **or**
- Are ready to practise as a nurse in Nova Scotia **but,**
- Want more time to prepare for the registration exam

TAKE THE EXAM NOW & GET A CONDITIONAL LICENCE LATER

This option is best for international nurses who:

- Do not have a job offer or an immigration pathway, **or**
- Are not ready to practise as a nurse in Nova Scotia **but,**
- Are ready to take the registration exam

- Your Verification of Registration (VOR) form is valid for 24 months and Criminal Record Check (CRC) is valid for 6 months
- If they expire before you activate your conditional licence, you may be required to re-submit new documents or declarations

- When you are ready to start the process to write the registration exam, log in to the [Applicant Portal](#) and pay the exam invoice

GET A CONDITIONAL LICENCE LATER & TAKE THE EXAM LATER

This option is best for international nurses who:

- Are waiting for a job offer or an immigration pathway, **or**
- Are not ready to practise as a nurse in Nova Scotia or ready to take the registration exam

¹ The NCLEX-RN can be taken at any Pearson Vue Testing location offering the exam. The CPNRE can be taken anywhere in the world if internet service and computer equipment meet the minimum requirements of the online proctoring service.

² International nurses living abroad must activate their conditional licence within 12 months of the date they arrive in Canada to work.