

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Steps for Internationally Educated
Nurses to Obtain the Maryland
Registered Nurse (RN) License



DHHS
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Department of Health
and Human Services

**Latino
Health
Initiative**
Welcome Back Center



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1. What is the first step for internationally educated nurses to obtain a Maryland RN license?

To have your international nursing education credentials evaluated for Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON) licensure, first you must contact Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) to confirm your school is part of the list of schools accepted. If your school qualifies, then you submit your original nursing education credentials with certified English translations to the Commission on CGFNS will assess your foreign credentials to ensure they are comparable to U.S. nursing education standards. The MBON only accepts evaluations from CGFNS, which will verify that your education meets the necessary requirements for obtaining nursing licensure in Maryland.

2. What are the steps to complete the online Credential Evaluation Service (CES) application request through the CGFNS?

Note: All documents submitted to CGFNS must be in English. If they are not in English, a certified translator from your country must translate them.

1. CGFNS requires secondary school and professional education information in order to evaluate one's documentation. By contacting the CGFNS first, it will ensure whether your school can be evaluated
2. Submit the Credential Evaluation Service (CES) Online Application by creating a CGFNS account at www.cgfns.org
3. Download the Request for License/Registration/Diploma Form and have it completed by your country's licensing authority and mailed to CGFNS by licensing authority (if applicable)
4. Download the Request for Academic Records/Transcripts Form and have it completed by your school and mailed to CGFNS by your school
5. Upload Secondary School Diploma/Examination Certificate

English Language Proficiency Exam passing result (this step can be completed at any point during the application request process, but is required to complete the CES report)

3. What exams do internationally educated nurses need to pass to become a Maryland RN?

Once your credentials are evaluated and accepted, you will need to pass the the English language proficiency test and then take the **National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN)**. This is a standardized exam that tests the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for safe and effective nursing practice and is a computer-adaptive test. After your credentials are evaluated, you will be eligible to apply for the NCLEX-RN exam through the **Pearson VUE** website.

4. Do I need to demonstrate English language proficiency?

Yes! **English language proficiency** is required to qualify to take the NCLEX-RN and practice as an RN in Maryland. If your nursing education was conducted in a language other than English, you will be required to demonstrate English proficiency by passing one of the below exams accepted by the Maryland Board of Nursing prior to taking the NCLEX-RN:

- **MET (Michigan English Test) 4-Skill**
- **TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) iBT (Internet-Based Test)**
- **IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Academic**
- **PTE (Pearson Test of English) Academic**
- **OET (Occupational English Test)**

5. What level of English proficiency is recommended before taking the English language proficiency exam?

The Welcome Back Center (WBC) recommends completing at least ESL level 5 in Reading and Writing, and Communication Skills for English Language Learners before preparing for the English proficiency exams listed in question 4. To qualify as a WBC participant, you must place at ESL level 2 in these areas, and the Center will guide you through the placement test.

6. How do I apply for the NCLEX-RN exam?

- 1. Complete Your Credentials Evaluation:** Ensure your nursing education credentials have been verified by CGFNS and you have received an official report, which includes the results of your English Language Proficiency Exam
- 2. Submit NCLEX-RN Application:** After your credentials are accepted, apply for the NCLEX-RN through the Pearson VUE website
- 3. Pay Exam Fee:** \$200
- 4. Authorization to Test (ATT):** Once your application is processed, you will receive an ATT from Pearson VUE, which allows you to schedule your exam. (If you do not appear for your NCLEX testing appointment, you will be required to re-register and re-pay NCLEX fees)
- 5. Schedule the NCLEX-RN Exam:** Use the ATT to schedule your exam at a Pearson VUE test center

Note: In Maryland, once you register, you must take the NCLEX-RN test within an average of 90 days from the validity dates of your Authorization to Test ("ATT"). These validity dates cannot be extended for any reason.

7. What documentation do I need to submit for RN licensure in Maryland?

You must submit the following documentation to the Maryland Board of Nursing:

- **Credential Evaluation:** Provide official reports from CGFNS confirming your education is equivalent to U.S. standards
- **Proof of English Proficiency** by passing any of the tests listed in question 4
- **Criminal Background Check:** A fingerprint-based background check is required and you will need to go to an authorized location and complete the check, prior to submitting your online RN application. The form that should be completed and taken to the finger-printing site can be found here (<https://mbon.maryland.gov/pages/chrc-index.aspx>)
- **Application for Licensure:** Complete the **RN application** available on the MBON website
- **NCLEX-RN Authorization:** Submit evidence that you passed the NCLEX-RN exam

8. What are the fees associated with licensure in Maryland and the NCLEX-RN exam?

- **CGFNS Credential Evaluation Fees:** \$485
- **English Language Proficiency Exam Fees:** TOEFL iBT \$255, IELTS Academic \$285, MET 4-Skill \$205, PTE Academic \$245, OET \$455
- **Application for Licensure Fee:** \$100
- **NCLEX-RN Exam Fee:** \$200
- **Fingerprinting and Background Check Fees:** Approximately \$60
- **Changing an Inactive License to an Active License Fee:** \$40

These fees are as of December 2024. Please note all fees are subject to change, check the Maryland Board of Nursing website for up-to-date fee information.

9. How long does it take to get licensed as an RN in Maryland if I am internationally educated?

The licensing process timeline varies and is dependant on each individual's unique circumstance. The timeline is influenced by many different variables such as one's English language proficiency level, the time it takes for credential evaluation, preparing for and passing the NCLEX-RN exam and processing of application materials by the Maryland Board of Nursing. The best way to avoid any delays is to start the process early and ensure all of your documentation is complete.

10. Can I work as a nurse while my application is being processed?

You cannot work as a Registered Nurse in Maryland until you have obtained your license. However, during the application process, you may be able to obtain certification for other healthcare roles, such as a Certified Nursing Assistant, Medical Technician, Phlebotomist, to secure a place in the healthcare workforce.

11. How do I prepare for the NCLEX exam as an internationally educated nurse?

Preparing for the NCLEX involves studying nursing theory and clinical practice. To enhance your preparation, you can take online review courses and use NCLEX preparation books. These resources will help familiarize you with the format of the exam and the nursing practices expected in the U.S. Time management and a consistent and organized study plan will help you build confidence and readiness for the exam. Below are some well-known NCLEX preparation courses that can help you prepare for the exam:

- Kaplan NCLEX-RN Review
- UWorld NCLEX Review
- Remar Review
- NCLEX High Yield
- Hurst Review Services
- Archer Review

12. How can I get more information?

For detailed and up-to-date information on licensure requirements for internationally educated nurses, consult the **Maryland Board of Nursing** website or contact their office directly:

- Website: <https://health.maryland.gov/mbon>
- Phone: (410) 585-1900
- Address: 4140 Patterson Ave, Baltimore, MD 21215

For detailed and up-to-date information on the credential evaluation process for internationally educated nurses, please contact **CGFNS** directly at:

- Customer Service: (215) 222-8454
- Website <http://www.cgfns.org/>

How do I apply for the NCLEX-RN exam?

Complete Your Credentials Evaluation

Credentials Evaluation Accepted

Submit NCLEX-RN Application
through Pearson VUE

Pay Exam Fee \$200

Application Processed

Receive ATT from Pearson VUE

Schedule NCLEX-RN Exam

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