



# WILL OSBN ACCEPT MY NURSING EDUCATION? WHAT APPLICANTS NEED TO KNOW

One of the most common questions received by Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN) staff is: “How do I know if my nursing education will be accepted by OSBN?” This important question comes from individuals interested in pursuing nursing education, those already educated in another U.S. state or territory, as well as from nurses educated abroad.

The Oregon Nurse Practice Act requires the Board to evaluate the education of all applicants for licensure. This review helps to ensure that every applicant meets Oregon’s educational standards prior to being issued a license. [Division 31](#) of the Oregon Nurse Practice Act is an important resource to help consider the many paths to Oregon licensure.

## Oregon-based Nursing Education Programs

Attending a nursing education program located in Oregon is the most direct way to ensure that your education meets OSBN standards. ORS 678.340 requires that all education programs based in Oregon must be approved by the Board. As a result, these programs are known to meet Oregon standards for licensure. A current list of Board-approved programs can be found on the OSBN website: Approved Programs.

## Out-of-State Nursing Education Programs

Nursing programs are considered “out-of-state” when they are not physically located in Oregon. This includes online programs headquartered elsewhere, even if they offer clinical placements in Oregon. OSBN does not have the authority to approve programs located outside of Oregon, and questions about these programs should be directed to the appropriate state Board of Nursing.

OSBN’s role in considering out-of-state education is to review an applicant’s transcript to ensure that the coursework meets Oregon education standards. OSBN staff cannot offer guidance or confirm whether these programs *will be* approved prior to completing your education. Because educational standards and regulatory requirements vary across states, it is important for prospective students to research any program they are considering, including reviewing the school’s approval and accreditation status and consulting with the appropriate higher education or regulatory authorities.

- **Education in U.S. Territories**

Nursing education received in a U.S. territory is considered similarly to education received within the states. One notable exception is nursing education completed in Puerto Rico, as most programs do not utilize National Council of State Boards of Nursing NCLEX codes and may not provide transcripts in English. Applicants educated in Puerto Rico typically need to provide a credential evaluation, described further in the “International Nursing Education” section below. OSBN staff are available to help confirm licensing requirements following education in a U.S. territory.

## International Nursing Education

Nurses educated outside the United States can also pursue licensure in Oregon. Most internationally educated applicants will need to obtain a credential evaluation. This evaluation verifies that you were educated comparably to U.S. standards and provides OSBN a course-by-course review of your program and how it prepared you for licensure in the country of education. More information about credential evaluation requirements can be found on the OSBN website: Credential Evaluation Requirements.

- **Canadian Education**

Since 2015, most Canadian programs utilize National Council of State Board of Nursing NCLEX program codes. Graduates of these programs do not need to complete a credential evaluation. Programs based in Quebec vary in their use of NCLEX codes, and OSBN staff are available to clarify for interested applicants whether a credential

evaluation is required. Canadian educated applicants who graduated prior to 2015 are still required to provide a credential evaluation when applying for a license.

- **Military Education**

Education received while in the U.S. Armed Forces can be used to apply for practical nursing licensure. OSBN accepts Joint Services transcripts with evidence of completion of the Army practical nursing program, Army 68WM6 training, or Air Force 4N051 5-skill level training.

## What else do I need to consider?

Oregon law, ORS 678.040(1), requires that every nursing education program contain a clinical component. This is defined in OAR 851-006-0011 as the “component of a nursing education program curriculum where students refine competencies in real practice settings or through the use of simulation. The clinical

*continued on page 22 >>*

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## NURSING EDUCATION

component can occur in any setting where students may impact a health outcome.” Prospective applicants should confirm that their education includes clinical instruction that meets this definition, as it is required for licensure.

An additional requirement of licensure is that the applicant has graduated from their education program. Some states allow individuals to “challenge” the NCLEX without completing an education program or allow students to test without graduating; these applicants are not eligible for licensure in Oregon.

This requirement also applies to certain directentry programs, most commonly programs that prepare individuals for initial RN licensure at the graduate level, or programs that offer combined RN and APRN education. Many of these programs allow students to complete prelicensure nursing coursework, take and pass the NCLEX, and then continue their advanced coursework. If the direct-entry program issues a certificate of completion at the end of the prelicensure

portion, OSBN will accept that certificate as evidence of graduation for licensure purposes. However, if no certificate is awarded at the end of the pre-licensure component, the student is not considered a graduate and therefore is not yet eligible for licensure until the entire program is completed.

### Closing

With multiple pathways into nursing, it is important for prospective students and applicants to take the time to research any nursing education program they are considering. Licensing requirements differ by state, prospective students should also consider that education in another state may not immediately qualify for licensure in Oregon. For specific questions regarding applying for an initial license or for licensure by endorsement, please review Division 31 of the Oregon Nurse Practice Act.



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