

AN ACT concerning regulation.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Nurse Practice Act is amended by changing Sections 60-5 and 60-10 as follows:

(225 ILCS 65/60-5)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2028)

Sec. 60-5. Registered professional nursing education programs. ~~RN education program requirements; out-of-State programs.~~

(a) The purpose of nursing education rules and regulations is to ensure that graduates of nursing education programs are prepared for safe and effective nursing practice. Early intervention when standards are not met assists programs in making improvements before warning signs are evident and before sanctions are necessary. The purpose of Board and Department approval of a registered professional nursing education program is to do the following:

(1) promote the safe practice of nursing by implementing standards for individuals seeking licensure as registered nurses;

(2) grant regulatory recognition to nursing education programs that the Board and the Department determine have

met established standards;

(3) ensure graduates meet the educational and legal requirements for the level of licensure that the graduates are seeking;

(4) facilitate graduates' endorsement to other states, territories, and countries as appropriate; and

(5) provide the public and prospective students with a published list of approved nursing programs that meet the standards established by law and the Board's rules.

(b) To establish a new registered professional nursing education program, the proposed program's administrator must notify the Department of the intention to establish a new program. The Department may approve the proposed program after a recommendation from the Board, upon the successful completion of the following process and a site visit:

(1) The proposed program must provide a feasibility study that includes the following information to the Board:

(A) governing institution approval and ongoing support;

(B) evidence of adequate institutional financial support that can be provided to the program on an ongoing basis;

(C) availability of educational resources, such as human resources, physical resources (including access to a library), clinical resources, and technical

learning resources;

(D) evidence of the institution meeting the Board of Higher Education's requirements and the accreditation requirements by a national accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education;

(E) evidence of the nursing program actively seeking pre-accreditation or candidate accreditation from a national accrediting body for nursing education recognized by the United States Department of Education;

(F) evidence of adequate numbers of clinical partnerships;

(G) availability of qualified faculty members and employment of a program director whose qualifications must meet the requirements set forth by the Department; and

(H) a proposed timeline for initiating the program.

(2) After the feasibility study has been submitted to the Department, the proposed program must complete the following program components and processes and submit verification of completion to the Department:

(A) development of a comprehensive program curriculum;

(B) submission of the program's ongoing systematic

evaluation plan;

(C) establishment of policies for student admission, progression, retention, and graduation; and

(D) establishment of policies and strategies to address students' needs, including those with documented disabilities.

(c) Nursing education rules must be based on evidence-based criteria and used to monitor the quality of a registered professional nursing education program. All registered professional nursing education programs must meet the following requirements:

(1) The program must have written and published criteria for student admission, progression, and performance.

(2) The written policies and procedures of the program must be reviewed and approved by the program's identified governing body and be readily accessible according to accreditation standards.

(3) The program must have policies in place that hold students responsible for professional behavior, including honesty and integrity, as outlined in the program's policies or student handbook. Such handbook or policies should be made available to the Department upon request.

(4) The administrator of the program must (i) hold a graduate degree in nursing, (ii) have a minimum of 2 years of clinical nursing and nursing education experience,

(iii) hold a current, active, and unencumbered license as a registered nurse in this State, (iv) have institutional authority and administrative responsibility over the program, and (v) be responsible for submitting the Department's annual report, consisting of aggregate program data as determined by the Board, by the provided deadline.

(d) Faculty members of a registered professional nursing education program must meet the following criteria:

(1) possess the requisite academic and experiential qualifications; and

(2) hold either:

(A) a graduate degree in nursing with at least 2 years of practical experience, if the faculty member teaches didactic nursing courses; or

(B) a current, active, and unencumbered license as a registered nurse in this State and a graduate degree in nursing, if the faculty member teaches clinical, lab, or simulation experience courses.

A faculty member who does not hold a graduate degree in nursing, but who holds a bachelor's degree in nursing, may teach didactic nursing, clinical, lab, or simulation experience courses if the faculty member obtains a waiver from the Division of Professional Regulation. A faculty member who does not meet the requirements of paragraph (2) of this subsection but who obtains a waiver to teach shall be

supervised by a faculty member with a graduate degree in nursing. No more than 20% of a program's faculty may have a waiver at one time.

(e) A registered professional nursing program must meet the following training and development requirements:

(1) Faculty members must be oriented in accordance with institutional policies and procedures. Orientation may include basic instruction in teaching, adult learning principles, learning assessment, curriculum development, and other subjects included as appropriate to meet the diverse needs of students and promote student learning and success.

(2) Newly hired faculty members must be mentored by experientially prepared colleagues.

(3) Faculty members must participate in ongoing professional development.

(4) The program must provide access to faculty development activities.

(f) To maintain enrollment in a registered professional nursing program, students must meet health standards, criminal background requirements, and other compliance standards as required by the program's clinical affiliation agreements.

(g) The curriculum of a registered professional nursing program must meet the following requirements:

(1) be built on a foundation of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences;

(2) have a written systematic evaluation plan in place;

(3) have didactic and clinical content that prepares graduates to practice safely, utilize the nursing process in a variety of clinical settings, and meet the holistic needs of diverse individuals, families, communities, and populations across the life span;

(4) combined with clinical experiences, prepare the graduate to take the NCLEX-RN exam for licensure;

(5) have strategies that are in place to remediate errors and near-misses in the clinical setting;

(6) meet the standards of the program's accrediting body;

(7) have clinical affiliation agreements in place for clinical experiences;

(8) have distance education methods that are consistent with the accreditation and regulatory standards; and

(9) provide direct care clinical experiences with patients, as defined by accrediting and regulatory bodies.

(h) A professional nursing education program shall not use simulation as a substitute for traditional clinical experiences for more than 25% of a course's total clinical hours. Programs may seek an exception to this subsection from the Board and must follow the requirements set forth in the "Guidelines for the Use of Simulation by Prelicensure Nursing

Programs" as published on the Department's website.

(h-5) The program must develop criteria to evaluate the simulation activities and allow students to evaluate the simulation experience on an ongoing basis.

(i) The program's resources must be sufficient to support the program's needs to meet its mission, goals, and outcomes. The program must provide accessibility resources to all students, including those enrolled in distance education, and institutional resources that assist students with academic and financial challenges.

(j) A registered professional nursing program must be accredited by a national accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education. If the program has its accreditation revoked, the program must submit a copy of the notice of revocation from the accrediting body to the Board within 30 days after receipt.

(k) If the Department obtains evidence at any time that a registered professional nursing program does not comply with this Act, the Department may perform an unannounced site visit. The Department shall have the discretion to determine if a complaint is unwarranted and not have to conduct a site visit. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following:

(1) complaints from students, faculty, or clinical agencies;

(2) program administrator turnover of more than 3

administrators in 5 years, excluding interim appointments;

(3) unexplained nursing faculty turnover or cuts in the number of nursing faculty;

(4) a pattern of NCLEX pass rates less than 75%, as defined by rule; and

(5) loss of national programmatic accreditation.

The Department has the discretion to determine if a complaint is unwarranted and if a site visit must be conducted.

(1) No program shall be placed on probation until calendar year 2026 NCLEX results can be measured. Any program with NCLEX pass rates for calendar year 2026 less than 75% shall receive a written warning of noncompliance from the Division of Professional Regulation of the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation pursuant to Title 68, Part 1300, Section 340 of the Illinois Administrative Code, except the Division may defer the written warning for an additional year if the program is within a public university and 55% or more of the university's total student population received Pell Grants.

~~(a) All registered professional nurse education programs must be reviewed by the Board and approved by the Department before the successful completion of such a program may be applied toward meeting the requirements for registered professional nurse licensure under this Act. Any program changing the level of educational preparation or the~~

~~relationship with or to the parent institution or establishing an extension of an existing program must request a review by the Board and approval by the Department. The Board shall review and make a recommendation for the approval or disapproval of a program by the Department based on the following criteria:~~

~~(1) a feasibility study that describes the need for the program and the facilities used, the potential of the program to recruit faculty and students, financial support for the program, and other criteria, as established by rule;~~

~~(2) program curriculum that meets all State requirements;~~

~~(2.5) measurement of program effectiveness based on a passage rate of all graduates over the 3 most recent calendar years without reference to first time test takers;~~

~~(3) the administration of the program by a Nurse Administrator and the involvement of a Nurse Administrator in the development of the program;~~

~~(4) the occurrence of a site visit prior to approval;~~
~~and~~

~~(5) beginning December 31, 2022, obtaining and maintaining programmatic accreditation by a national accrediting body for nursing education recognized by the United States Department of Education and approved by the~~

~~Department.~~

~~The Department and Board of Nursing shall be notified within 30 days if the program loses its accreditation. The Department may adopt rules regarding a warning process and reaccreditation.~~

~~(b) In order to obtain initial Department approval and to maintain Department approval, a registered professional nursing program must meet all of the following requirements:~~

~~(1) The institution responsible for conducting the program and the Nurse Administrator must ensure that individual faculty members are academically and professionally competent.~~

~~(2) The program curriculum must contain all applicable requirements established by rule, including both theory and clinical components.~~

~~(3) The passage rates of the program's graduating classes on the State approved licensure exam must be deemed satisfactory by the Department.~~

~~(c) Program site visits to an institution conducting or hosting a professional nursing program may be made at the discretion of the Nursing Coordinator or upon recommendation of the Board. Full routine site visits may be conducted by the Department for periodic evaluation. Such visits shall be used to determine compliance with this Act. Full routine site visits must be announced and may be waived at the discretion of the Department if the program maintains accreditation with an~~

~~accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education and approved by the Department.~~

~~(d) Any institution conducting a registered professional nursing program that wishes to discontinue the program must do each of the following:~~

~~(1) Notify the Department, in writing, of its intent to discontinue the program.~~

~~(2) Continue to meet the requirements of this Act and the rules adopted thereunder until the official date of termination of the program.~~

~~(3) Notify the Department of the date on which the last student shall graduate from the program and the program shall terminate.~~

~~(4) Assist remaining students in the continuation of their education in the event of program termination prior to the graduation of the program's final student.~~

~~(5) Upon the closure of the program, notify the Department, in writing, of the location of student and graduate records' storage.~~

(m) ~~(e)~~ Out-of-State registered professional nursing education programs planning to offer clinical practice experiences in this State must meet the requirements set forth in this Section and must meet the clinical and faculty requirements for institutions outside of this State, as established by rule. The institution responsible for conducting an out-of-State registered professional nursing

education program and the administrator of the program shall be responsible for ensuring that the individual faculty and preceptors overseeing the clinical experience are academically and professionally competent.

(n) To operate under this Act, a registered professional nursing education program must maintain approval by the Department in accordance with the following:

(1) A registered professional nursing education program must complete and submit an annual evaluation report to the Department and maintain programmatic accreditation by a national accrediting body for nursing education recognized by the United States Department of Education.

(2) The Board and the Department shall review and analyze various sources of information regarding program performance before granting annual approval, including, but not limited to:

(A) previous Board survey visits and reports;

(B) annual report data;

(C) evidence of accreditation by a national accrediting body for nursing education recognized by the United States Department of Education;

(D) Board-recognized national accreditation visits, reports, and other pertinent national accreditation documents provided by the program; and

(E) results of ongoing programmatic evaluation.

(o) The Department shall make the policies and procedures related to probationary status transparent, and related forms shall be readily available to program administrators on the Department's website.

(Source: P.A. 103-533, eff. 1-1-24.)

(225 ILCS 65/60-10)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2028)

Sec. 60-10. RN licensure by examination.

(a) Each applicant who successfully meets the requirements of this Section is eligible for licensure as a registered professional nurse.

(b) An applicant for licensure by examination to practice as a registered professional nurse is eligible for licensure when the following requirements are met:

(1) the applicant has submitted a completed written application, on forms provided by the Department, and fees, as established by the Department;

(2) the applicant has graduated from a professional nursing education program approved by the Department or has been granted a certificate of completion of pre-licensure requirements from another United States jurisdiction;

(3) the applicant has successfully completed a licensure examination approved by the Department;

(4) (blank);

(5) the applicant has submitted to the criminal history records check required under Section 50-35 of this Act;

(6) the applicant has submitted, either to the Department or its designated testing service, a fee covering the cost of providing the examination; failure to appear for the examination on the scheduled date at the time and place specified after the applicant's application for examination has been received and acknowledged by the Department or the designated testing service shall result in the forfeiture of the examination fee; and

(7) the applicant has met all other requirements established by the Department by rule.

An applicant for licensure by examination may take the Department-approved examination in another jurisdiction.

(b-3) An applicant who graduates from a professional nursing program in this State on or after January 1, 2024 (the effective date of Public Act 103-533) ~~this amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly~~ and does not take the licensure examination within 180 days after his or her degree is conferred by the institution of higher education or fails the licensure examination for a second time shall be required to demonstrate proof of completion of a National Council Licensure Examination preparatory class or a comparable test preparatory program before taking a subsequent licensure examination or the graduate may return to the institution of

higher education from which he or she graduated which shall provide remedial educational resources to the graduate at no cost to the graduate. Such an applicant must contact the institution of higher education from which he or she graduated prior to retesting.

(b-4) (Blank). ~~All professional nursing programs in probationary status on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly and subject to a program revision plan shall be deemed in good standing for a period of 3 years beginning on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 103rd General Assembly. Prior to September 1, 2026, no professional nursing program shall be placed on probationary status for failing to reach a passage rate of less than 75%.~~

(b-5) If an applicant for licensure by examination neglects, fails, or refuses to take an examination or fails to pass an examination for a license within 3 years of the date of initial application, the application shall be denied. When an applicant's application is denied due to the failure to pass the examination within the 3-year period, that applicant must undertake an additional course of education as defined by rule prior to submitting a new application for licensure. Any new application must be accompanied by the required fee, evidence of meeting the requirements in force at the time of the new application, and evidence of completion of the additional course of education prescribed by rule.

(c) An applicant for licensure by examination shall have

one year after the date of notification of the successful completion of the examination to apply to the Department for a license. If an applicant fails to apply within one year, the applicant shall be required to retake and pass the examination unless licensed in another jurisdiction of the United States.

(d) An applicant for licensure by examination who passes the Department-approved licensure examination for professional nursing may obtain employment as a license-pending registered nurse and practice under the direction of a registered professional nurse or an advanced practice registered nurse until such time as he or she receives his or her license to practice or until the license is denied. In no instance shall any such applicant practice or be employed in any management capacity. An individual may be employed as a license-pending registered nurse if all of the following criteria are met:

(1) He or she has completed and passed the Department-approved licensure exam and presents to the employer the official written notification indicating successful passage of the licensure examination.

(2) He or she has completed and submitted to the Department an application for licensure under this Section as a registered professional nurse.

(3) He or she has submitted the required licensure fee.

(4) He or she has met all other requirements established by rule, including having submitted to a

criminal history records check.

(e) The privilege to practice as a license-pending registered nurse shall terminate with the occurrence of any of the following:

(1) Six months have passed since the official date of passing the licensure exam as inscribed on the formal written notification indicating passage of the exam. The 6-month license-pending period may be extended if more time is needed by the Department to process the licensure application.

(2) Receipt of the registered professional nurse license from the Department.

(3) Notification from the Department that the application for licensure has been refused.

(4) A request by the Department that the individual terminate practicing as a license-pending registered nurse until an official decision is made by the Department to grant or deny a registered professional nurse license.

(f) (Blank).

(g) (Blank).

(h) (Blank).

(i) (Blank).

(j) (Blank).

(k) All applicants for registered professional nurse licensure have 3 years after the date of application to complete the application process. If the process has not been

completed within 3 years after the date of application, the application shall be denied, the fee forfeited, and the applicant must reapply and meet the requirements in effect at the time of reapplication.

(l) All applicants for registered nurse licensure by examination who are graduates of practical nursing educational programs in a country other than the United States and its territories shall have their nursing education credentials evaluated by a Department-approved nursing credentialing evaluation service. No such applicant may be issued a license under this Act unless the applicant's program is deemed by the nursing credentialing evaluation service to be equivalent to a professional nursing education program approved by the Department. An applicant who has graduated from a nursing educational program outside of the United States or its territories and whose first language is not English shall submit evidence of English proficiency, as defined by rule.

(m) (Blank).

(Source: P.A. 103-533, eff. 1-1-24; 103-686, eff. 1-1-25.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect on September 1, 2026.