

**Guidelines**



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# **Restricted Temporary Permits**

**Guidelines for Internationally Educated Nurses  
(IENs) and Employers**

**September 2011**

Approved by the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA)  
Provincial Council, September 2011.

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## Introduction

Nursing jurisdictions across Canada, including the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA), base their requirements for registered nurse registration on entry to practice competencies that prepare nurses to care for people of all ages and genders, across the continuum of health care, in situations of health and illness and in a variety of health care environments. As nursing education and practice varies around the world, internationally educated nurses (IENs) may not be able to demonstrate all of the entry to practice competencies needed to fulfill the roles and responsibilities expected of the registered nurse in the Canadian health care system.

**Restricted temporary**<sup>1</sup> registration is a possible route to registered nurse registration for IEN applicants with a gap in the competencies expected **for Maternal/Newborn**<sup>2</sup> **nursing or for Child Health nursing**<sup>3</sup> (**Pediatrics**) only. An applicant with a **restricted temporary permit** can work as a graduate nurse **while** completing additional education required by CARNA to fill the competency gap(s). On completion of the education the applicant is expected to work toward meeting all other requirements for full registration including passing the registration exam.

The purpose of this document is to provide specific information to IENs and employers about the requirements associated with **restricted temporary registration** as it pertains to an identified competency gap in Maternal/Newborn nursing or in Child Health nursing (Pediatrics).

## Background

The *Health Professions Act (HPA)* and the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation* provide the basis for CARNA application and registration requirements. These documents can be accessed through the CARNA website.

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<sup>1</sup> CARNA Provincial Council approved the use of the restricted temporary permit effective June 2008 and in September 2010 delegated the authority to set ongoing policy regarding revisions to this type of temporary registration to CARNA Registration Committee.

<sup>2</sup> **Maternal/Newborn nursing:** pertains to individuals requiring preconception, antepartum, labour and delivery, postpartum and newborn nursing care.

<sup>3</sup> **Child Health nursing:** pertains to individuals under 18 years of age.

The first step in the registration process for all internationally educated nurses (IENs) is to apply and pay an assessment fee directly with the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS). This is followed by an **application for assessment of eligibility** to proceed with meeting the entrance requirements for registration as a registered nurse in Alberta.

The route to registration for the internationally educated applicant is based on evidence of competence in the practice of the profession that satisfies CARNA the applicant has a combination of education, experience, practice or other qualifications, that demonstrates the competence required for registration as a regulated member.

**Substantially equivalent competence** is the term used by CARNA to describe this combination of education, experience, practice or other qualifications that demonstrates the competence required for registration. CARNA assessment of substantially equivalent competence initially involves the review of educational transcripts, nurse registration verifications, and other documents that provide information regarding competence to practice. CARNA may require an applicant to undergo examinations, testing, and assessment activities to help with this assessment (Substantially Equivalent Competency (SEC) assessment). Additional education may be required to fill the competency gaps identified during review of application documents or during an SEC assessment. Any additional nursing education required by CARNA is taken through specified educational institutions.

## Requirements for a Restricted Temporary Permit

Following the **initial review** of an application, an IEN applicant may be identified by CARNA as having an apparent **gap** in the competencies expected for **only** Maternal/Newborn nursing or Child Health nursing (Pediatrics). **This applicant will be notified by CARNA of their eligibility to apply for a restricted temporary permit** and what is required for that application.

A restricted temporary permit authorizes this IEN to be employed and practice nursing while taking the expected steps to meet registered nurse registration requirements. During this time, their practice is restricted to caring for clients **outside** the area of identified gap. It is expected that the IEN will:

- take the required courses or education (may include theory and clinical practicum), identified by CARNA, that will enable them to meet the CARNA entry to practice competencies

- write and achieve a passing score on the registration exam within the maximum 3 attempts allowed
- obtain and maintain a satisfactory employer reference
- obtain full licensure as a registered nurse

A temporary permit is only valid for up to six (6) months and can be renewed twice; the total time period allowed for temporary registration is eighteen (18) months. Moving from a restricted temporary permit to a temporary permit that does not have restrictions (regular temporary permit) does not mean the applicant has an additional eighteen (18) months on the regular temporary permit. The total period of time regardless of type of temporary permit is eighteen (18) months only.

If the IEN is unable to meet the requirements and expectations within the required time period, the eligibility for restricted temporary registration and a restricted temporary permit will be revoked.

**Requirements for a restricted temporary permit include:**

- confirmation from CARNA that the applicant is eligible for this permit
- an offer of employment and declaration of support from an employer
- the IEN's practice will be restricted to caring for clients **outside** the area of identified gap; (they are **restricted from** nursing practice with the patient population in Maternal/Newborn nursing or Child Health nursing (Pediatrics))
- the IEN's practice will be **restricted to** employment at **one site or facility** in Alberta specified by CARNA
- a plan, that is supported by the employer, for how the IEN will complete any required substantially equivalent competency (SEC) assessments as soon as possible and any required additional nursing education **before** they will be eligible to write the registration exam
- a satisfactory employer reference and progress reports if renewing the restricted temporary permit

**Note:** The IEN is expected to complete any required SEC assessments before a second restricted temporary permit will be issued to them.

## Eligibility for the Registration Exam and a Regular Temporary Permit

Once all required additional nursing education is successfully completed the IEN:

- is eligible to have the practice restrictions removed from their permit and thus hold a regular temporary permit
- is eligible to apply to write the registration exam

## Eligibility for a Full RN Permit

The IEN may progress to a full RN permit following:

- successful passing of the registration exam (within the maximum 3 attempts allowed)
- provision of a final satisfactory employer reference

## Practice Restrictions, Conditions and Expectations

An internationally educated nurse (IEN) who has a restricted temporary permit is authorized to perform the restricted activities that a registered nurse may perform as set out in the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation* Sections 15(1) and 15(3) according to the following criteria:

- The IEN will be **restricted from** nursing practice with the patient population in Maternal/Newborn nursing and / or Child Health nursing (Pediatrics) as specified by CARNA and will be **restricted to** employment at one site or facility in Alberta specified by CARNA.
- The IEN will only be employed in a position for which the IEN has the competencies to practice and should not be learning a new area of practice or be engaged in orientation to a specialty area of unfamiliar practice. This is in keeping with Section 16 of the *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation*: “regulated members must restrict themselves in performing restricted activities to those activities that they are competent to perform and to those that are appropriate to the member’s area of practice and the procedure being performed”. The front line manager/supervisor who will be working directly with the IEN will be aware of the

restrictions, conditions and expectations for the IEN and involved in the references and progress reports needed for permit renewal.

- Appropriate and sufficient on-site orientation, support and supervision will be provided to the IEN.
- The IEN must be given patient assignments that include only those patients outside of his/her area of restriction and the IEN will not be assigned work or responsibilities that would contravene the restrictions on the restricted temporary permit, regardless of clinical setting or circumstances.
- There should be at least one RN working with the IEN who is able to provide appropriate support and supervision.
- The IEN should not be assigned as the nurse in charge or left alone in a practice setting as the only nurse unless they have the necessary clinical experience and competencies to take on this role and responsibility and the restrictions on the restricted temporary permit will not be contravened.
- The IEN must not preceptor students.
- Any other employee of the Employer assigning work to the IEN must be aware of the restrictions on the IEN practice permit.

## Practice Support

IENs come to Canada from a variety of countries, bringing with them different sets of skills and abilities, personal circumstances and experiences (McGuire and Murphy, 2005). “IENs need support, guidance and mentorship to help them socialize and integrate into nursing culture” (Murphy, 2008, page 43).

Successful integration into Canadian life and into nursing practice in the Canadian health system can be daunting for IENs. They face new ways of practice, technology, terminology, and medication administration systems (Edwards and Davis, 2006). Many IENs struggle with fluency in English. Even English speaking IENs can have difficulty with accent and colloquial English.

Murphy (2008) noted in her study that many IENs come from cultures and systems where the relationship with physicians is different from the collaborative and interactive relationship that is expected here in Canada. Some IENs may not be comfortable expressing their professional opinions or accustomed to independence and autonomy in decision making. In many international settings, the patient does not have a voice but



simply undergoes the treatment that the physician has determined is appropriate. Here in Canada, the patient's voice is encouraged and acknowledged.

IENs are also adjusting to life in Canada, where they need to form new friendships and social support systems. Climate and other factors may present additional challenges that require adaptation on the part of IENs.

Murphy (2008) suggests a number of strategies to provide support to IENs including:

- learning opportunities that allow social interaction among employees and hands on practical experience
- formal meetings that are scheduled with clinical educators and managers
- mentorship, preceptorship and buddy programs
- support groups
- education for those nurses who will buddy IENs to prepare them to meet the unique learning needs of the IEN
- case studies and cooperative learning to assist in interactive problem solving
- reflective journaling
- clinical simulation scenarios
- counseling and stress management supports

## Conclusion

It is important to recognize that IENs with a restricted temporary permit will need to adjust to nursing practice and life here in Alberta, and will be expected to complete additional education and clinical practice in their focused area of deficit so that they can attain full licensure as a registered nurse. Support from employers and colleagues will be needed if they are to be successful. IENs bring to the practice setting their unique experience and a rich cultural diversity that mirrors the cultural diversity in Canada. Effective efforts to ensure the safe and smooth transition of IENs into Alberta's health system will ultimately benefit IENs, the profession and the public.

For more information; access the CARNA website [www.nurses.ab.ca](http://www.nurses.ab.ca) or contact CARNA registration services at (780) 451-0043 ext. 548 or [ien@nurses.ab.ca](mailto:ien@nurses.ab.ca).

## References

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## Appendix A: Summary of Accountabilities

The IEN, the employer and CARNA all hold accountabilities to ensure patient safety and successful transition for the IEN holding a Restricted Temporary Permit.

### CARNA

- Assessing and approving the eligibility of the IEN applicant for a restricted temporary permit and communicating this to the IEN applicant.
- Approving any renewals of this temporary permit.
- Acting on any information that the IEN or the employer may not be abiding by the practice restrictions and conditions placed on the restricted temporary permit.
- Communicating with and educating applicants, employers, and other stakeholders regarding the restricted temporary permit.
- Monitoring and evaluating the use of the restricted temporary permit and the processes for this permit.

### IEN Holder of Restricted TP

- Understanding and abiding by the practice restrictions and conditions placed on their practice permit.
- Actively pursuing:
  - ◆ substantially equivalent competency (SEC) assessment if required by CARNA
  - ◆ additional nursing education required by CARNA
  - ◆ passing the registration exam
  - ◆ maintaining a satisfactory employer reference so that they may become fully licensed as a registered nurse with no practice permit restrictions within the 18 month temporary registration limitation

### Employer

Understanding and abiding by the practice restrictions, conditions, and expectations of the restricted temporary permit including:

- The IEN will be **restricted from** nursing practice with the patient population in Maternal/Newborn<sup>4</sup> nursing and / or Child Health<sup>5</sup> nursing (Pediatrics) and will be **restricted to** employment at one site or facility in Alberta specified by CARNA.
- The IEN will only be employed in a position for which the IEN has the competencies to practice and should not be learning a new area of practice or be engaged in orientation to a specialty area of unfamiliar practice. The front line manager/supervisor who will be working directly with the IEN will be aware of the restrictions, conditions and expectations for the IEN.
- Appropriate and sufficient on-site orientation, support and supervision will be provided to the IEN.
- The IEN must be given patient assignments that include only those patients outside of his/her area of restriction and the IEN will not be assigned work or responsibilities that would contravene the restrictions on the restricted temporary permit, **regardless of clinical setting or circumstances**.
- There should be at least one RN working with the IEN who is able to provide appropriate support and supervision.
- The IEN should not be assigned as the nurse in charge or left alone in a practice setting as the only nurse, unless they have the necessary clinical experience and competencies to take on this role and responsibility and the restrictions on the restricted temporary permit will not be contravened.
- The IEN must not preceptor students.
- Any other employee of the Employer assigning work to the IEN must be aware of the restrictions on the IEN practice permit.

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