



OMFC REGISTRATION REVIEW

**College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba
Final Report (2012)**

OFFICE OF THE MANITOBA FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER

Introduction

This report presents the results of the Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner's (OMFC) registration review with the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (College or CRNM) as of May 2012.

Registration reviews are conducted as part of the Fairness Commissioner's mandate to review the registration practices of regulatory bodies subject to *The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act* (Act).

The purpose of a registration review is to ensure compliance to the Act, specifically the Fair Registration Practices Code, and to make recommendations to improve compliance. As the objective of the Act is a call for fair registration practice, with particular attention drawn to the need for the fair consideration of internationally educated applicants, compliance refers primarily to the fairness of assessment and registration practice. Co-operation with the Fairness Commissioner is also a matter of compliance.

The Act stipulates that a registration review for any given regulator is to be undertaken at times specified by the Fairness Commissioner. It also stipulates that the content of a registration review is to include an analysis of the relevance and necessity of registration requirements for the practice of the profession, the timeliness of decision making, the reasonableness of fees and the registration of internationally educated individuals. This may involve the review of any third parties employed in the assessment and registration process.

Final Registration Review Reports are public documents submitted to the Province's Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism. The reports are comprised of the OMFC's Findings Report for the regulator, which details the results of the registration review, and the Action Plan submitted by the regulator to address any issues raised by the Fairness Commissioner's recommendations.

This report, then, presents the OMFC's Findings Report for the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba together with the College's Action Plan, as well as the Fairness Commissioner's Statement of Concurrence. In order of presentation, this includes:

- An overview of the registration review process undertaken with the College;
- A brief description of the College's assessment and registration practice;
- A summary of the registration review findings;
- Recommendations from the Fairness Commissioner;
- The College's Action Plan to address the issues raised by the recommendations;
- A statement from the Fairness Commissioner concerning the College's proposed Action Plan.

College's Registration Review Process

In consultation with regulators, the OMFC introduced a registration review process, including documentation and compliance evaluation tools, in the fall of 2009. The multi-step, registration review process has several key phases: documenting and understanding, evaluating and hearing feedback, and developing and agreeing to an Action Plan to move things forward. The process is designed to support meaningful reviews that concretely identify fairness issues and lead to progressive change.

The College's registration review began in November 2009 with the steps, activities and dates as follows:

CRNM's Registration Review		
Step	Activity	Date
Process Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and review of CRNM's registration materials by OMFC • Meetings between OMFC and CRNM to complete the documentation of the registration and assessment process • Completed <i>Process Documentation Tool</i> presented to CRNM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2009 • Meetings in December 2009 and July 2010 • July 2010
Compliance Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Compliance Evaluation Report</i> submitted to CRNM • Debrief Meeting to between OMFC & CRNM to discuss the <i>Compliance Evaluation Report</i> • <i>Compliance Evaluation Report</i> finalized, including feedback from CRNM; final report presented to CRNM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 2011 • May 2011 • June 2011
Findings Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings Report summarizing registration review results provided to CRNM • Formal request to CRNM for an Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2011 • December 2011

CRNM's Registration Review		
Step	Activity	Date
Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRNM's Action Plan in response to the Fairness Commissioner's recommendations • Meeting with CRNM • CRNM's Final Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2012 • February 2012 • March 2012
Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Registration Review Report presented to CRNM • Registration review process completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2012

Overview of College's Registration Process

The College currently operates under the authority of *The Registered Nurses Act* (C.C.S.M. c. R40), the *Registered Nurses Regulation* (Regulation 128/2001) and the *Extended Practice Regulation* (Regulation 43/2005). In Manitoba, all nurses practicing and using the registered nurse, extended practice nurse or graduate nurse designation must be registered with the College.

Qualification and Assessment

There are two principal qualifications needed for registration as a registered nurse: graduation from an approved, baccalaureate level nursing program or its substantive equivalent and passing the Canadian Registered Nurses Examination (National Exam). Several Manitoba nursing programs are approved and Canadian programs approved by other provincial regulators across the country are also recognized. The National Exam is administered by the Canadian Nurses Association (National Body). The exam is comprised of 200 multiple-choice questions that evaluate nursing knowledge and an understanding of nursing roles under a Canadian health care model.

International education programs are subjected to the College's 'Substantive Equivalence Assessment' to determine their equivalence to the Canadian standard. Currently few international programs can be determined as equivalent and consequently most IENs are required to complete a Clinical Competence Assessment at Winnipeg's Health Sciences Centre. The Clinical Competence Assessment is a 3-5 day evaluation that includes a variety of testing formats: self-assessment, written tests, clinical judgement and triple-jump scenario assessment, as well as an objective structured clinical exam.

If nursing competencies are demonstrated through the Clinical Competence Assessment, applicants will be granted eligibility to write the National Exam and will qualify for Graduate Nurse Registration. If gaps in skills or knowledge are found, a course of study prescribed by the College must be completed. This usually requires fulfilling 6-18 months of course work through Red River College's Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Nurses (Bridging Program). If deficits are too significant to be addressed by the Bridging Program, applicants will need to go back to school or pursue alternative careers.

Graduate Nurse Registration is possible for applicants who meet all of the College's requirements and have been accepted to write the National Exam. The graduate nurse designation allows individuals to work under supervision as nurses until the next available sitting of the exam, which is offered three times yearly. Three attempts to challenge the exam are permitted, although graduate registration is revoked and remedial course work is required upon a second failing.

Application Process

Step 1

For IEN applicants, the first step in the application process involves opening a file with the College. This requires submitting:

- a completed application form;
- proof of identification;
- if applicable, evidence of English or French language proficiency;
- proof of immigration status;
- \$525.00 application fee.

All of this documentation needs to be present for the College to open a file and hold these records for an applicant.

Step 2

Upon opening a file with the College applicants have one year to submit the following step 2 documentation or their files will be closed and they will need to re-apply:

- An IQAS basic academic credential assessment;
- A completed Basic Nursing Education Request for Transcript Form -- sent to the applicant's educational institution and then from the institution to the College);
- A criminal record check current within six months;
- A completed Verification of Registration Form -- sent to the applicant's previous licensing authority and then from the authority to the College;
- A completed Verification of Practice Form – sent to past employers and then from employers to the College;
- A completed Documentation of Registered Nursing Experience Form.

The receipt of this documentation in steps 1 & 2 completes the Application, and the College will proceed to assessment. Several of these documents are subject to expiration dating – language tests, criminal records, verification of previous registration – and must be current at the time of assessment.

Time and Cost

The range of time and cost to register with the College ranges markedly. For IENs who are able to collect and provide the required documents and who do not need gap training or English or French language upgrading, the entire registration process, including a competency assessment, will take as little as 6 months upon completed application and cost approximately \$1200.00 (application fee, exam fee and registration fee) plus associated documentation costs.

Government support for the Health Sciences Centre's Clinical Competency Assessment and Red River College's Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Nurses helps keep costs down as they are currently free of charge for IENs.

Still however, the College's registration process is structured in such a way that the vast majority of IENs will not experience a route to registration that is particularly efficient or affordable. The most prominent cost and delay barriers include:

- Meeting a demanding English or French language proficiency requirement upon application as opposed to registration;
- Arranging third party documentation;
- Steep application and re-application fees;
- Associated costs and delays involved in gap training and a return to study;
- Re-supplying expired documentation, including the possibility of multiple language test results, regulatory history and criminal record checks;
- National Exam failures are expensive and can result in the need for remedial coursework and the need to re-submit expired documentation.

The reality is that most IENs face a registration process that takes several years, requires a return to study, involves repeated cycles of re-supplying expired documentation and involves costs considerably greater than they appear on paper.

Summary of Findings

The College's Compliance Evaluation Report reveals a regulator committed to the fair assessment and registration of IENs. Faced with large numbers of IEN applicants from culturally diverse backgrounds, in a profession where expertise and public safety issues loom large, the College confronts a complex challenge providing fair, effective and efficient assessment and registration practice. In many respects, the work of the College and the National Body in this area is commendable.

Significant fairness issues, however, have been identified in the registration review and have resulted in an extensive list of recommendations from the Fairness Commissioner. Aspects of the College's assessment and registration practice are clearly less than ideal; creating real barriers and delays for IENs. Chief among these issues are the absence of a pathway for the assessment and registration of recruited IENs, and problematic application, documentation and appeal policies.

Following the QR Process Model that maps the registration process as a set of steps from pre-migration to labour market entry, the key findings for the College's assessment and registration process are listed below. Further analysis and explanation can be found in the College's Compliance Evaluation Report.

- For IENs whose qualifications are determined by the College to meet standard, the registration process is efficient and cost-effective. The Graduate Nurse Registry allows for timely entry into professional practice.
- For IENs requiring gap training and a longer period for registration, the process is structured in such a way that IENs face a costly and extensive return to study and face many delays as a result of being required to re-submit, sometimes repeatedly, difficult-to-acquire, time-sensitive documents.
- The College's current assessment and registration process no longer allows RHAs the ability to recruit IENs on temporary work visas.
- A variety of professional orientation, immigration and assessment support material is provided both by the College and the National Body. The Bridging Program at Red River College offers a course about professional nursing practice in Canada. The College is currently working with the OMFC on the development of a professional practice seminar for nurses.
- Much of the registration information is clear and useful; the various Fact Sheets and Standards of Practice documents easily meet plain language standards, many of which are exemplary in this regard.
- Some aspects of the information are found wanting and confusing. To mention a few examples, better information about the timelines, appeals, and alternative documentation is needed.

- A dedicated language assessment for nurses, the Canadian English Language Benchmark (CELBAN) is available and provides occupation specific assessment.
- Expiration policies on language test results and previous registration documents are applied without consideration of relevant circumstance.
- IENs and out-of-province Canadian applicants are required, without clear reason, to demonstrate evidence of previous registration.
- The College's numerous standards documents lay the groundwork for rational assessment by providing well defined entry-to-practice competencies and guidelines for ethical conduct and professional practice.
- The College's Substantive Equivalence Assessment of qualifications is not sufficiently transparent and adequate written reasons fail to accompany assessment results.
- Few details are disclosed to applicants about the results of their Clinical Competency Assessment.
- The College's communication policies with IEN applicants, especially those who have unusual applications, difficulties with third parties or who will require a longer period to be registered, often fails to be systematic and effective.
- A dedicated process is in place to assess IENs and address their gaps. The Clinical Competency Assessment is grounded in the knowledge and competency required in practice, includes multiple assessment methods, is portable and allows IENs to demonstrate what they can do. The Bridging Program for Internationally Educated Nurses is designed to provide an individually tailored response to allow IENs to fill their particular gaps as identified by the College. Both are currently no-fee.
- The National Exam is subject to regular and extensive psychometric scrutiny. Useful annual reports and analysis are provided by the National Body for the writing of the exam. Detailed exam results are provided to applicants.
- IENs consistently have significantly lower pass rates on the National Exam compared to their Canadian trained counterparts. Currently there is no possibility for partial credit for sections or topic areas on the exam where individuals are successful. If applicants fail, the exam must be re-written in its entirety.
- No proper appeal process is in place. No dedicated pre-appeal process, where applicants can be heard before the time and expense of a formal hearing is available.
- No supervised practice route to registration, where gaps in qualifications can be addressed under structured supervision is available.

Fairness Commissioner's Recommendations

As a result of the OMFC's registration review of the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba and to ensure and improve compliance to *The Fair Registration Practice in Regulated Professions Act*, the Fairness Commissioner recommends:

1. *That* expiration policies for language tests, regulatory history and criminal record checks be reconsidered;
2. *That* the previous registration requirement be removed;
3. *That* the new, higher application processing fee for IENs be reviewed to ensure it does not exceed cost-recovery;
4. *That* the College's Substantive Equivalence Assessment of qualifications be made more transparent, making explicit:
 - the academic standard employed;
 - the criteria for the assessment of work experience;
 - detailed reasons explaining how an applicant's work experience and academic qualifications have been assessed.
5. *That* a formal strategy be implemented to develop a knowledge base to support substantive equivalence determinations;
6. *That* the 14 year (primary, secondary, and post-secondary) criteria in the academic standard be revised to remove the primary and secondary requirement;
7. *That* the College provide applicants detailed results of the Clinical Competence Assessment at the Health Sciences Centre;
8. *That* communications policies be reviewed to ensure their effectiveness for applicants; especially for those who have difficulties with third parties or who will require bridging and a longer period to be registered;
9. *That* a form of supervised practice be introduced that allows IENs the ability to make up gaps in practice;
10. *That* the College work with the National Body subjecting the National Exam to a cultural review and allow for partial recognition for sections of the exam;
11. *That* the College develop and implement a proper appeal process;
12. *That* the College develop a dedicated pre-appeal strategy;

13. With respect to the assessment and registration information provided by the College, *that*:
 - a. an orientation be introduced about the use and variety of registration documents that applicants need to understand, including in-person orientation session for IENs;
 - b. the timelines for the College's assessment of qualifications and the time to secure a Clinical Competence Assessment spot be made clear;
 - c. more information be provided about the range of time and cost that the assessment and registration may take;
 - d. information be provided about the likelihood of re-submitting documentation and how to plan to avoid this situation;
 - e. better information be provided about role and use of the employment history form;
 - f. clear information be provided about the possibility of registration for IENs without past work experience;
 - g. information be provided about alternative documentation and access to records;
 - h. the CELBAN be better promoted in the registration information as the preferred language assessment for IENs;
 - i. the National Body's "Candidate Performance Profile" be subject to a plain language treatment and an introduction that explains how to read and make use of the report be introduced;
 - j. The applicant instruction and requirement pages be re-written to convey a more welcoming tone;
14. *That* the College's policy of discarding incomplete applications and the communication around incomplete applications be reconsidered;
15. *That* the College work in partnership with other stakeholders to develop exam preparation support and workshops for IENs;
16. Sufficient demand notwithstanding, *that* the College work with MB Health to bring the Clinical Competence Assessment to rural communities;
17. *That* the College broaden its immigration requirement, accepting letters of interest from employers, and that the College consult with the RHAs to discuss solutions that will enable them to attract and recruit IENs.

Action Plan

In January 2012, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba provided its initial Action Plan (See Appendix 1) in response to the Fairness Commissioner's recommendations. In the Fairness Commissioner's judgment, the Action Plan was unsatisfactory and the College indicated it needed further clarification on several of the recommendations.

The College also challenged the Fairness Commissioner's right to talk to IENs who were unhappy with the results of their applications.

The OMFC met with the College to provide clarification as requested and to further clarify the role of the Fairness Commissioner.

Regarding the role of the Fairness Commissioner, Part 3, 12(3) of the *Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act*, stipulates that "*the fairness commissioner may not become involved in a registration decision or an internal review or appeal decision on behalf of an applicant or potential applicant for registration*". Through focus groups or individuals who contact our office, OMFC has learned a great deal about assessment and registration issues Internationally Educated Professionals face. We do not advocate for applicants. Our relationship with internationally educated professionals involves providing information on policies and practices that lead to a decision. When required, we seek information and or clarification directly from the regulators. The Fairness Commissioner can and should learn from individuals who are facing challenges with assessment and registration processes of regulatory bodies.

In March 2012, the College provided a revised Action Plan that is included in this section.

Action Plan – March 2012

The following is the March Action Plan submitted by CRNM and is reprinted here in its entirety.

In response to the Fairness Commissioner's recommendations, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba has developed both near term and longer term strategies in the following Action Plan.

The nearer term strategies are:

1. We will continue to monitor our expiration policies on a regular basis and will adjust when reasonable and necessary.
2. The CRNM Board of Directors will continue to monitor its policy that deals with extraordinary circumstances which may prevent a person from obtaining a copy of their verification of registration. We have a statutory mandate to request verification of registration.
3. We will continue to review the IEN application fee each year to ensure that it does not exceed cost recovery and that it adequately covers the cost of processing IEN applications.
4.
 - a. We will make available our academic standard (as per our policy) in the Internationally Educated Applicant (IEN) portion of our website.
 - b. We will review our website to ensure that it is clearly stated that IEN applicants will undergo both an evaluation of their academic and work experience as well as a clinical competence assessment.
6. We will revise our policy to reflect the requirement that applicants must have completed a minimum of two years of post-secondary nursing education which meets our requirements related to hours of theory and clinical practice.
7. We will provide applicants with more detailed results from their Clinical Competence Assessments.
8. We will review and revise the information on our website and in our communication with individual applicants to ensure that we make clear the anticipated length of time for the application and registration processes.
11. The College will develop and implement an arms-length appeal process for IENs.
12. We will formalize the current pre-appeal process of meeting with the Director, Regulatory Services or the Executive Director.

13.
 - a. We will prepare a PowerPoint presentation regarding our registration process and will post it on our website. We will also make clear that applicants are always welcome to contact our registration personnel for assistance with the application process, and are welcome to meet with our registration staff in person to receive clarification and assistance.
 - b. We will make clear the timelines associated with our qualifications and clinical competence assessment processes.
 - c. We will provide more information regarding the range of time and costs associated with the clinical competence assessment, bridging program and registration.
 - d. We will provide information regarding the potential for expiry of some documents and how best to deal with this situation. We will continue to advise applicants when their documents are approaching their expiry dates.
 - e. We will provide information regarding the role and use of the employment history form.
 - f. We will provide information regarding registration of IENs with no past work experience.
 - g. We will advise applicants who are unable to produce academic or registration verification documents that alternative documentation may be accepted on a case-by-case basis and only in extenuating circumstances.
 - i. There is currently an explanation regarding how to read and make use of the exam report on the Canadian Nurses Association website, and we will provide a link to it from our website. This information is currently provided in the letter attached to the performance profile which is sent to candidates who were unsuccessful on an exam attempt.
 - j. We will review the instruction and requirements page to ensure that the information provided is transparent and in plain language.
14. The College will continue to review its policy with regard to incomplete applications to ensure that it is reasonable and fair.
15. CRNM is willing to provide input to stakeholders regarding exam preparation workshops.

The longer term strategies are:

9. We will work with Manitoba Health and Red River College to determine both fiscal and academic capacity in the system for a supervised practice program for IENs.
16. We will work with Manitoba Health to examine ways in which the Clinical Competence Assessment might be extended to rural communities.
17. CRNM will continue to work with federal and provincial immigration departments and employers to determine whether there are mutually acceptable solutions.

Recommendations with which we are unable to comply

10. The national exam is subject to a cultural review. As it is a comprehensive exam and does not have discrete sections, it is not possible to allow for partial recognition of sections of the exam.
13. h. We are unable to promote CELBAN as a preferred language assessment. We believe it is only fair to offer options to applicants, provided they are all able to measure language ability to the extent we require.

Fairness Commissioner's Concurrence

Many aspects of the College's Action Plan represent a progressive response to the OMFC's recommendations. Many of these actions will support the fairer assessment and recognition of IENs and are fully consistent with *The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act*.

Commitment to the fair assessment and registration of IENs is an expressed strategic direction of the College. Fair, effective and efficient registration practice is a complex challenge and our registration review of the College indicates that many of the pieces of the puzzle are in place. The Health Science's Centre's Clinical Competency Assessment and Red River College's Bridging Program represent milestones for the province and the College should be recognized for its role in their development and implementation. A dedicated language assessment, CELBAN, is in place to provide occupation specific assessment. The College's numerous standards documents and well defined entry-to-practice documents have laid the groundwork for rational regulation.

With its Action Plan, the College is committing to improved practice regarding more complete information, better communication with applicants, more transparent assessments, the introduction of a proper appeals process and working with stakeholders to open a pathway for recruited IENs. These are important steps that if effectively addressed will result in a fairer assessment and registration process.

I am, however, concerned that some elements of the Action Plan do not represent an appropriate response to the recommendations. The Action Plan fails to address some significant challenges raised in the report. I believe that too many IENs will continue to face an unnecessarily extended and delayed registration process as a result of documentation policies which are excessive, such as expiration policies that result in applicants having to repeatedly supply difficult-to-acquire documents. Some IENs will be blocked from registration due to problematic registration requirements: any recent graduate, who immigrates to Manitoba without previous registration, will not be considered.

I am disappointed that the College fails to acknowledge the negative impact these practices are having on internationally educated applicants. The practices I have identified as a barrier have little bearing on the integrity and rigor of the assessment process. What I am recommending will not compromise the College's professional standards.

These considerations lead me to conclude that even when the responses in the Action Plan are implemented, the College's assessment and registration practice will not be wholly compliant with *The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act*. The OMFC will continue to discuss these fairness issues with the College, and will be conducting its next Registration Review in the fall of 2013.

Appendix 1: Action Plan – January 2012

The following is the January Action Plan submitted by CRNM and is reprinted here in its entirety.

This document is the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM) response to the Findings Report from the Office of the Manitoba Fairness Commissioner (OMFC). It includes detailed responses to each of the recommendations and a chart which outlines our action plan.

At the outset, we would like to advise that we are unable to detect any supporting evidence for many of the recommendations and the subsequent determinations that our current actions are unfair. From conversations we have had with OMFC staff, it would appear that many of the recommendations arise from OMFC interaction with internationally-educated nurses (IENs), whether in the form of focus groups, meetings or telephone conversations with individual IENs who may be unhappy with the results of their applications. If this is the case, it would be contrary to the statutory mandate of the OMFC and would also be contrary to the intent of the legislation. We say this only because we can find no other evidence to support many of the recommendations regarding our processes.

The CRNM continually reviews its registration processes to ensure that they are fair, but more importantly, that they fulfill our statutory mandate to protect the public from unsafe, incompetent and unethical registered nursing practice. We take our mandate very seriously. However, we are more than willing to make changes based on recommendations which do not put us in a position of breaching our mandate.

In its Summary of Findings, the OMFC quite correctly states that, for IENs who meet our standards, the registration process is efficient and cost-effective. It is acknowledged that those IENs who do not meet our standards and who require bridging do encounter a more lengthy registration process. However, these additional steps are necessary in order to ensure competence. It must be borne in mind that the length of the process is, to a substantial extent, within the control of the applicant.

IENs apply to us from around the world and from a variety of educational backgrounds (which may vary within a single country). Given that many of the countries of IEN origin have no nursing regulatory bodies, and given that it is impossible to know the standards of every school of nursing in the world, our job is to assess equivalence using the most effective and fair means possible. We determine an individual applicant's suitability for practice, not that of a particular educational institution or country.

Recommendations

1. That expiration policies for language tests, regulatory history and criminal record checks be reconsidered.

The policy regarding expiration of documents applies to all applicants, not just IENs.

Expiration dates for language tests are a necessity in terms of protecting the public. The exception to this is if a language test expires when an IEN is taking courses in the Bridging Program. That an applicant is residing in Manitoba does not mean that they are using English on a regular basis.

Criminal record checks have expiration dates because the time period is a moving window to the point at which an applicant is accepted for registration. As well, as time passes, pending charges against an applicant in their previous jurisdiction may have come to fruition and charges may have been laid, or new incidents may have occurred. Exceptions are made in situations which are clearly untenable (e.g., an applicant would have to return to their home country to obtain another criminal record check).

The expiration date for verification of registration in good standing is there for a reason similar to the situation with criminal record checks. As time passes, a complaint against an applicant may have arisen and the applicant may no longer be in good standing. The opposite may also be true – that an applicant has been cleared of allegations/charges and is now in good standing.

2. That the previous registration requirement be removed.

Subsection 5(3) of the Registered Nurses Regulation specifies that an applicant who received nursing education outside Manitoba must also submit written verification from the original jurisdiction in which he or she was registered. This is the only method that allows us to have any sense that an applicant graduated from a registered nursing program, that the program is approved and that they have passed any necessary exam in their jurisdiction of origin.

3. That the new, higher application processing fee for IENs be reviewed to ensure it does not exceed cost-recovery.

We will continue to review this fee each year, as we do with all our fees.

4. That the College's Substantive Equivalence Assessment of qualifications be made more transparent, making explicit:
 - The academic standard employed;
 - The criteria for the assessment of work experience;
 - Detailed reasons explaining how an applicant's work experience and academic qualifications have been assessed.

We have determined that the fairest method of assessment of an applicant is to refer all eligible applicants directly to a clinical competence assessment (CCA). We will also make available the academic standard used when assessing an applicant's academic qualifications. Additionally, we will provide a written explanation of how work experience is used to adjust the clinical competence assessment for an individual applicant. This will be part of our action plan.

5. That a formal strategy be implemented to develop a knowledge base to support substantive equivalence determinations.

We require clarification of this recommendation.

6. That the 14 year (primary, secondary, and post-secondary) criteria in the academic standard be revised to remove the primary and secondary requirement.

We are unclear on the basis for this recommendation. Currently, we require no less than 14 years combined primary, secondary and post-secondary education. This is equivalent, in time, to a diploma in nursing. Some countries have nursing programs which are completed during secondary school. This is insufficient, and does not meet our Canadian standard. We hold IENs to the same standard as we hold domestic graduates.

7. That the College provide applicants detailed results of the Clinical Competence Assessment at the Health Sciences Centre.

We will add this to our Action Plan.

8. That communications policies be reviewed to ensure their effectiveness for applicants; especially for those who have difficulties with third parties or who will require bridging and a longer period to be registered.

We require clarification of this recommendation.

9. That a form of supervised practice be introduced that allows IENs the ability to make up gaps in practice.

We would be willing to add this to our action plan for the long-term. Currently, and Manitoba Health Workforce Strategies division can confirm

this, the limiting factor in the expansion of nursing education programs is the availability of preceptors. It is difficult for RNs working in the system to fulfill their duties of employment and supervise a student/IEN. However, in the event that this shortage could be overcome with a combination of fiscal and human resources on the part of Red River College, we would likely be supportive. As well, there would need to be an understanding that supervised practice would be used for those applicants whose gaps are less severe.

10. That the College work with the National Body subjecting the National Exam to a cultural review and allow for partial recognition for sections of the exam.

The request to allow applicants to re-write only the parts of the national exam they have failed is unacceptable. First, the exam is not broken into discrete components. Second, for an applicant who has failed the exam overall, there can be no certainty that their knowledge of the sections they passed is sufficient. Third, in order to maintain exam security, it is not possible for a candidate to write the exact same exam. As a result, we are unable to comply with this request.

As well, the Executive Directors of the regulatory bodies across the country are currently in negotiations with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing with regard to a new national exam. Part of any such exam will be a cultural review. However, it must be borne in mind that a large part of nursing in Canada is cultural in nature and IENs must take responsibility for adapting to this culture.

11. That the College develop and implement a proper appeal process.

We require clarification of this recommendation.

12. That the College develop a dedicated pre-appeal strategy.

With regard to a pre-appeal process, we are currently reviewing our options related to a pre-appeal process for candidates who are unhappy with how their continuing competence assessment results translate into a decision regarding Bridging Program courses. Currently, if they have questions regarding the courses they have been assigned, they may request a meeting with the Registration Manager/Director of Regulatory Services/Executive Director. We are considering options which would be more arms-length in nature. This will be part of our action plan.

13. With respect to the assessment and registration information provided by the College, that:

- An orientation be introduced about the use and variety of registration documents that applicants need to understand, including in-person orientation session for IENs;

As many IENs apply from overseas, this would not be practicable. IENs are always welcome to contact our registration personnel for assistance with their application forms. As well, they are always welcome to meet with registration staff in-person for assistance. Inherent in the professional application process is the responsibility to seek clarification when needed.

- The timelines for the Colleges assessment of qualifications and the time to secure a Clinical Competence Assessment spot be made clear;

We will add this to our action plan.

- More information be provided about the range of time and cost that the assessment and registration may take.

We will add this to our action plan.

- Information be provided about the likelihood of re-submitting documentation and how to plan to avoid this situation.

We will add this to our action plan.

- Better information be provided about the role and use of the employment history form.

We will add this to our action plan.

- Clear information be provided about the possibility of registration for IENs without past work experience.

We will add this to our action plan.

- Information be provided about alternative documentation and access to records.

Alternative documentation is assessed and accepted on a case-by-case basis, and is not standardized, as people will have different abilities to provide information. We will add this to our action plan.

- The CELBAN be better promoted in the registration information as the preferred language assessment for IENs.

We do not promote one language exam over another. We believe it is only fair to offer options to applicants, provided they are all able to measure language ability to the extent we require. As well, the CELBAN is available only in parts of Canada and not internationally.

- The National Body’s “Candidate Performance Profile” be subject to a plain language treatment and an introduction that explains how to read and make use of the report be introduced.

There is currently an explanation on the Canadian Nurses Association website.

- The applicant instruction and requirement pages be re-written to convey a more welcoming tone.

We require clarification of this recommendation as to what would constitute a “welcoming tone”.

14. That the College’s policy of discarding incomplete applications and the communication around incomplete applications be reconsidered.

The College staff gave a great deal of thought and consideration to this policy. There are only five initial requirements to open an application and then the applicant has a full year in which to provide the remaining information. This is eminently reasonable. We do, however, make exceptions in situations where it is clear that the applicant is making every effort, but is unable to meet the deadline.

We have explained to the OMFC our reasoning for this policy change. There are many IENs who start applications in many jurisdictions as a fail-safe measure. The human and fiscal resources required to follow-up with the applications are prohibitive and unnecessary.

15. That the College work in partnership with other stakeholders to develop exam preparation support and workshops for IENs.

As we have explained to the OMFC, this is not our area of business. We are to act in the public interest, not that of the applicant. This is an activity more appropriately taken on by a professional association such as the Philippine Nurses Association or the Manitoba Nurses Union. While we would not be the lead on the project, we would be willing to provide input regarding topics, etc. We will make this part of our action plan.

16. Sufficient demand notwithstanding, that the College work with MB Health to bring the Clinical Competence Assessment to rural communities.

It is within the purview of Manitoba Health to determine whether or not sufficient demand is a requirement and, if so, what is sufficient demand to require funding. We will work with Manitoba Health as part of our action plan.

17. That the College broaden its immigration requirement, accepting letters of interest from employers, and that the College consult with the RHAs to discuss solutions that will enable them to attract and recruit IENs.

Our current assessment and registration process has been revised to ensure that applicants have documentation which will allow them to legally enter Canada in order to complete the necessary requirements. This is not an unreasonable expectation of applicants, and it ensures that CRNM's finite resources (financial and human) are directed towards applicants who are likely to be able to complete the registration process.

That said, the CRNM is currently working with the federal and provincial immigration departments in order to find a workable solution to the issues raised by employers. This requires flexibility on the part of all parties, and may take time. This will be part of our action plan.

Action Plan – January 2012

Recommendation	Action	Timeframe (S= short-term, M= medium-term, L= long-term)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will review the IEN application fee each year to ensure that it does not exceed cost recover and that it adequately covers the cost of processing IEN applications. 	S
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will make available our academic standard (as per our policy) on our Internationally Educated Applicant (IEN) website. We will send all IENs who meet the application criteria to the Clinical Competence Assessment (CCA). 	S S
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide more detailed results from their CCA. 	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will regularly review our communications policies with regard to plain language and clarity. 	S
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with Manitoba Health and Red River College to determine both fiscal and academic capacity in the system for such an endeavor. 	L

Recommendation	Action	Timeframe (S= short-term, M= medium-term, L= long-term)
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will implement an arms-length review process for IENs who are not in agreement with any gap training required as a result of their CCA results 	S
13(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide a talking Powerpoint presentation regarding our registration process. 	S
13(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will make clear the timelines associated with our qualifications and CCA processes. 	S
13(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide more information regarding the range of time and costs associated with the CCA and registration. 	S
13(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide information regarding the potential for expiry of some documents and how to avoid this situation. 	S
13(e)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide information regarding the role and use of the employment history form. 	S
13(f)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will provide information regarding registration of IENs with no past work experience. 	S
13(g)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will advise that there is an option for alternative documentation in exceptional circumstances, and that each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. 	S
13(i)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will speak with the exam buyers' group with regard to subjecting the Candidate Performance Profile to a plain language treatment. 	M-L
13(j)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will review the instruction and requirements page. 	S

Recommendation	Action	Timeframe (S= short-term, M= medium-term, L= long-term)
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with other, more appropriate, stakeholders such as the Philippine Nurses Association and the Manitoba Nurses Union to provide relevant information regarding exam preparation. 	M
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with Manitoba Health to examine ways in which the CCA might be extended to rural communities. 	M-L
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRNM is working with Labour and Immigration and Service Canada to explore options with regard to our immigration requirement. 	M



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