

# 2022 Registration Review Report

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College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba



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## Introduction

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The Fair Registration Practices Office (FRPO) issues this registration review report for the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM) under authority of The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act (act). Registration reviews are conducted at times specified by the director of fair registration practices and in accordance with the review provisions in the act, section 15.1, 15.2, and 15.3. The purpose of this review is to determine compliance with the legislation and to identify areas that may need improvement. Compliance to the legislation refers both to the fairness of assessment and registration practice, with particular attention to the fair consideration of internationally educated applicants, as well as the co-operation of the regulator with the director.

Manitoba's fairness legislation was amended in December 2021. This review is largely restricted to the consideration of compliance regarding three new duties in the Fair Registration Practices Code: a duty that assessment criteria be necessary, a duty to abide domestic trade agreements and a duty to notify FRPO regarding changes in assessment and registration practice. Outstanding issues raised in previous registration review reports may also be raised or result in further recommendation for action.

This registration review results in an FRPO statement of compliance for the regulator. Reviews that result in recommendations to change practice or policy contain an action plan response from the regulator, current as of November 2022.

To provide context, a brief description of CRNM's state of progress under fairness legislation to date precedes the compliance analysis. The report also includes appendices containing a flowchart of the registration process for internationally educated applicants, as well as registration data. Data is the latest information available at the time of review completion.

## State of Progress

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Since the introduction of Manitoba's fairness legislation in 2009, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM) has and continues to work co-operatively with FRPO. CRNM is committed to the fair assessment and registration of internationally educated nurses (IENs).

CRNM's licensure process for internationally educated nurses (IENs) has undergone significant change over the last 15 years. In 2008, Red River College Polytechnic — formerly Red River College — established the Bridging Pathway for Internationally Educated Nurses (BPIEN). In 2011, the Clinical Competence Assessment (CCA) was introduced. In 2014, the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS), a national credential assessment and document repository, was established. In 2015, the NCLEX-RN exam was adopted, replacing the Canadian Registered Nursing Exam. In 2018, CRNM transitioned under The Regulated Health Professions Act. In 2022, Red River College Polytechnic merged the Bridging Pathways for Internationally Educated Nurses (BPIEN) with its Nurse Refresher Program, creating the Nurse Re-Entry Program (NREP).

In Manitoba and across the country, nursing shortages are posing a serious challenge to provincial health care systems. This has resulted in renewed attention to the effectiveness and efficiency of IEN assessment and registration practice. CRNM is working with Manitoba Health and other stakeholders considering options to improve registration opportunities for IENs as part of the response to the shortage in Manitoba.

CRNM has taken numerous steps to improve the fairness of its assessment and registration process. Some of the more significant measures include:

- working to develop, monitor and improve the CCA. Wait times were eliminated. More recently, the clinical practice hour requirement was adjusted to support greater eligibility for IENs to qualify for a CCA
- working to approve the new Nursing Re-Entry Program (NREP), formerly known as the Bridging Pathway for Internationally Educated Nurses
- introducing a new registration pathway for IENs, allowing some applicants to complete the entire NREP program without requiring a CCA
- improving registration information, access to assessment results and appeal opportunities
- participating on NNAS' boards and committees, working for better policy and process, including a recent streamlining review
- removing barriers to labour mobility regarding language proficiency requirements, the Clinical Competence Assessment and practice hour requirements
- working with the LPN and RPN colleges to consider better co-ordination and a streamlined approach for IEN applicants among Manitoba's nursing professions
- only requiring expired documents be updated by the end of the assessment and registration process
- working with the Canadian Nurse Regulator Collaborative reviewing the language proficiency policies for the nursing professions in Canada

- implementing new language proficiency policies, including some lower cut scores and moving away from requiring test results upfront in the assessment process to a later item registration requirement
- allowing qualified IENs in the registration process eligibility to work under supervision as unregistered nurse employees, similar to what is now possible for third and fourth year nursing students

## Fair Practice Analysis

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### I. Assessment criteria must be necessary – act, 8(4)

The criteria used in an assessment of qualifications must be necessary to assess competence in the practice of the profession.

With regard to substantive assessment criteria in a profession, for instance, the type and level of academic training required or the level of scrutiny brought to assess qualifications, FRPO recognises the authority of self-regulated professions setting these standards and will only question these requirements in the circumstance they appear patently unreasonable. FRPO's evaluation focuses on the ways in which criteria and requirements may be unnecessary, unduly burdensome, or potentially result in forms of systemic discrimination, particularly as they affect internationally educated applicants (IEAs).

### CRNM's compliance to necessary assessment criteria

CRNM's assessment criteria and various requirements for registration are for the most part warranted and necessary. FRPO identifies the following concerns:

1. A Clinical Competence Assessment (CCA) is a mandatory requirement for most IENs. Recently, CRNM introduced a new assessment policy that allows sufficiently qualified IENs the option of completing the entire NREP without undertaking a CCA. For some IENs, this option may be an attractive path to registration.

Other provincial RN nursing regulators across the country have similar CCA waiver policies in place. In some cases, this also includes a possibility for well-qualified applicants, those trained in similar practice environments, with strong professional experience and a pass standing on the NCLEX exam, to proceed directly to registration without a CCA.

Broadening CRNM's CCA waiver policy to allow well-qualified IENs to proceed with registration without a CCA would further promote the efficiency of the registration process.

2. A mandatory previous registration requirement is in place for IENs that includes recent graduates who have not registered prior to application to CRNM.

Currently applicants educated out-of-province – domestic and internationally educated – need to provide evidence of previous registration. Applicants must arrange for the direct submission of documentation from the regulating authority.

For those with previous registration, this makes sense. However, for recent graduates who immigrate or move to Manitoba without registering in their home jurisdiction or province, there is little warrant for this requirement. For domestically educated nurses, this burden may not be particularly onerous to address, but for IENs, it can pose a serious barrier.

II. **Duty to comply with domestic trade agreements – act, 4(1)**

A regulated profession must ensure that its registration practices comply with the obligations of a domestic trade agreement.

The Manitoba government has labour mobility obligations that extend to regulated occupations, under both Chapter 7: Labour Mobility of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and Article 13: Labour Mobility of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA). In Manitoba, regulated professions are required to comply with labour mobility obligations under The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act, section 4(1), The Labour Mobility Act, section 3(1) and for health professions, under The Regulated Health Professions Act, section 32(3).

In the regulated occupations, the purpose of these obligations is to provide labour mobility through license-to-license recognition. This needs to occur without any material requirements for training, experience, examinations or assessments — CFTA, Article 705, paragraph 1, NWPTA, Article 13, paragraphs 1 and 2.

**CRNM's compliance to labour mobility obligations**

CRNM has made a number of changes to its requirements for mobility applicants: applicants in good standing and considered current in their home jurisdiction no longer face any potential requirements for additional practice hours, or needing to redo a CCA, or needing to supply language proficiency test results.

Given these changes, FRPO finds CRNM fully compliant with its labour mobility obligations as set out in the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement.

### III. Notice of changes in registration practices – act, 5(2)

A regulated profession that proposes to change its registration practices, as described in the information provided under clause (1)(a), must notify the director of the proposed change, at the time and in the manner and form required by the director.

The purpose of notification is to ensure FRPO has accurate, up-to-date information about the registration practices of Manitoba regulators. This supports FRPO's oversight role and allows for proactive discussion about the fairness of proposed changes.

#### CRNM's compliance to the duty to notify

In preparation for this registration review, FRPO requested updates regarding changes to assessment and registration practice. CRNM responded to this request drawing to FRPO's attention a number of recent changes, including meeting with FRPO to discuss a significant change in assessment policy. CRNM complies with the duty to notify.

### IV. Assessing Qualifications – act, 8(2)

If a regulated profession makes its own assessment of qualifications, it must do so in a way that is transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

FRPO identifies a fairness concern under this duty:

A high number of IENs are assessed as lacking sufficient qualification to qualify for bridge or gap training. To proceed, these applicants need to complete an approved nursing education program, returning to university to start again. From 2017 to 2021, close to half of all IENs undertaking a Clinical Competence Assessment (CCA) were assessed by CRNM as being unqualified to proceed without completing a new program or degree. FRPO registration data indicates CRNM's post-CCA assessment resulted in one per cent of applicants being eligible to proceed without bridge training, 51 per cent requiring some measure of bridge training and 47 per cent needing a new education program to qualify.

FRPO's concern is not to second-guess CRNM's assessment criteria or suggest the assessment is not objective. Rather, this is about the external validity of the assessment result; does a poor CCA performance necessarily reflect a lack of qualification and the need for new nursing education.

CRNM is moving to allow rewrite opportunities for the CCA. This is a progressive measure that should support better outcomes for some of those who underperform on their initial CCA.

Other measures warrant consideration. Both CRNM and the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Nursing offer CCA preparation information and supports. However, relative to resources provided in some other provincial jurisdictions, there may be an opportunity for improvement, positively impacting assessment outcomes. Publishing annual post-CCA assessment outcomes is another useful measure that would help inform IENs and encourage stronger preparation.



## Recommendations

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The Fair Registration Practices Office makes the following recommendations for the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba to improve compliance to The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Profession Act:

### **Assessment criteria must be necessary – act, 8(4)**

1. For well-qualified applicants, consider a waiver policy for the Clinical Competence Assessment, allowing applicants to proceed directly to registration.
2. For recent graduates, introduce waiver policies regarding the previous registration requirement.

### **Assessing Qualifications – act, 8(2)**

1. Review post-Clinical Competence Assessment outcomes with a consideration of strategies to improve performance outcomes. Publish annual post-Clinical Competence Assessment outcomes.

## Regulator Action Plan

In response to the recommendation made by the Fair Registration Practices Office, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba committed to the following action plan, current as of November 2022:

| Recommendation   | Action(s)   | Anticipated Completion Date                           |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1. For well-qualified applicants, consider a waiver policy for the Clinical Competence Assessment, allowing applicants to proceed directly to registration.</p> | <p>A. The College will continue to monitor and evaluate best practices related to the assessment of internationally educated applicants.</p> <p>B. The College will work with RN regulators in other Canadian jurisdictions to seek to better understand the evidence used to support processes wherein an applicant can proceed directly to registration without a Clinical Competence Assessment (or other comparable assessment) or completion of remedial education.</p> <p>C. The College will continue to advocate for a greater degree of harmonization among Canadian RN regulators. This will include encouraging dialogue at the Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators (CCRNR) of changes to registration processes under consideration in various jurisdictions.</p> | <p>A. Ongoing</p> <p>B. Q3 2023</p> <p>C. Ongoing</p> |

| Recommendation  | Action(s)  | Anticipated Completion Date   |
|---|--|---|
| 2. For recent graduates, introduce waiver policies regarding the previous registration requirement.   | <p>A. The College will conduct a jurisdictional scan to determine if any other Canadian jurisdictions currently have a similar policy in place.</p> <p>B. The College will conduct a risk analysis to analyze the impacts of waiving this requirement.</p>   | <p>A. Q3 2023</p> <p>B. Q4 2023</p>   |
| 3. Review post-Clinical Competence Assessment outcomes with a consideration of strategies to improve performance outcomes. Publish annual post-Clinical Competence Assessment outcomes. | <p>A. The College will explore, in partnership with the University of Manitoba, opportunities to increase applicants' feeling of preparedness for the Clinical Competence Assessment. This may include revising or developing new communications materials about what a CCA is and what to expect during the assessment.</p> <p>B. The College will explore integration of Clinical Competence Assessment outcomes as a future component of its data reporting strategy.</p> | <p>A. Work will begin in 2022 and continue through 2023</p> <p>B. Est. 2024</p> |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Comments</b></p>   |
|---|
| <p>The College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba is committed to protecting and serving the public interest through quality, effective registered nursing regulation.</p> <p>The College recently implemented a number of changes that will modernise and expedite the registration process for internationally educated nurse (IEN) applicants as well as their capacity to contribute effectively to the health system while working towards registration. The College expects that collaboration with Manitoba Health will continue as Manitoba works to address the significant need for qualified nurses.</p> |

## Compliance

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FRPO's 2022 registration review of the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba (CRNM) examines their compliance to three duties in the Fair Registration Practices Code of the act; assessment criteria are necessary, labour mobility obligations are respected and FRPO is notified regarding changes in assessment and registration practice.

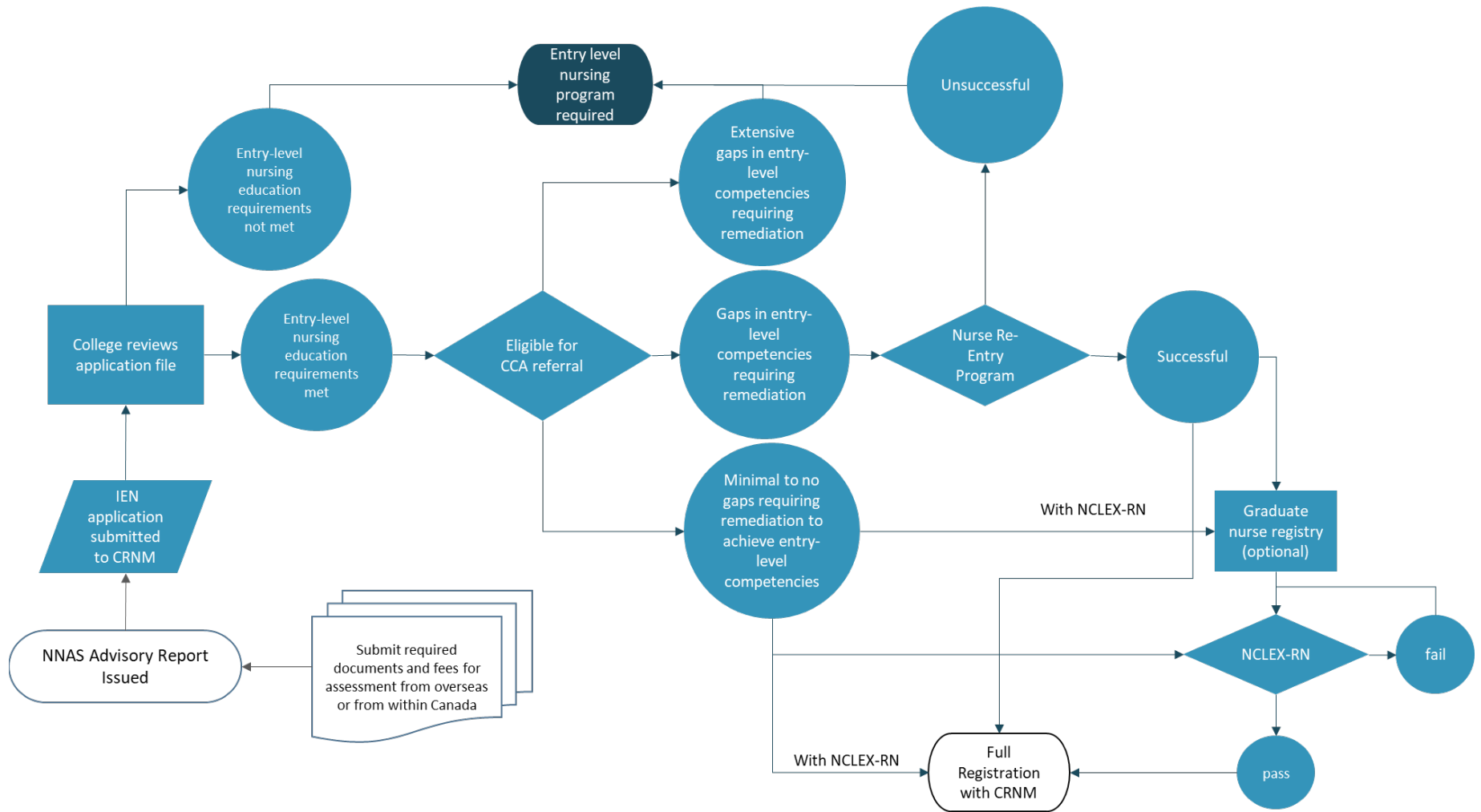
FRPO finds CRNM compliant with the duty to notify and the duty to abide labour mobility obligations.

Concerns are raised about the need for:

- a Clinical Competence Assessment waiver policy for well-qualified IENs
- a previous registration waiver policy for recent graduates
- a review of post-Clinical Competence Assessment outcomes with a consideration of strategies to improve performance outcomes and making assessment outcome statistics available to applicants

CRNM's action plan commitments represent reasonable steps to address FRPO's concerns. FRPO appreciates the need for CRNM to research these matters to ensure any change in policy or practice is warranted. CRNM's recent policy changes and collaboration with Manitoba Health and other stakeholders is commendable and resulting in significant progress for fair IEN registration practice.

# Appendix 1 – Registration Process for Internationally Educated Applicants



## Appendix 2 – Registration Data

College of Registered  
Nurses of Manitoba



**13,735**  
Registered  
Members

(As of December 2021)

### 2011–2021 Internationally Educated Applicant Data



**1,004**  
applications

#### Application Outcomes

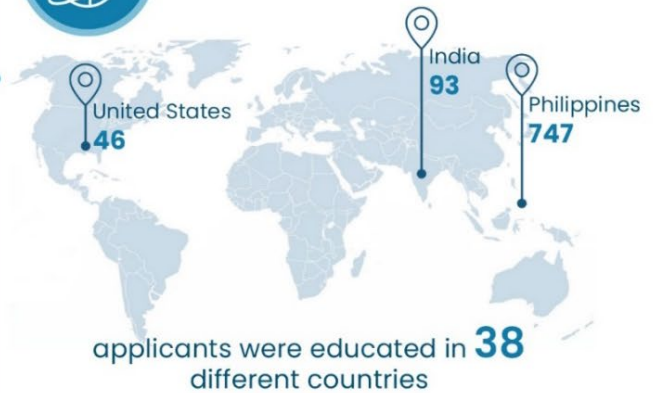


registered - 47% | in process - 6% | file closed - 47%

#### Closed File Status



#### Top Countries of Education



#### Median Time to Registration

**2.3** years

### 2012–2021 Domestically Educated Applicant Data



**6,722**  
applications

**5,470 (81%)**  
registrations