

CGFNS publishes new book for nurses

2009 VisaScreen® nurse applicants to receive complimentary copy

The book is dedicated to all foreign-educated nurses whose wisdom, courage, and caring spirit give voice and meaning to the nursing profession worldwide.

A primary resource for foreign-educated nurses who continue to be part of the health care system in the United States (U.S.) has just been published by CGFNS International and Springer Publishing Company. *The Official Guide for Foreign-Educated Nurses, What You Need to Know About Nursing and Health Care in the United States*, provides invaluable insight about providing safe, competent nursing care for foreign-educated nurses joining their U.S. colleagues.

What You Need to Know About Nursing and Health Care in the United States is now available for the purchase price of \$35.00 and can be ordered online from Springer Publishing at www.springerpub.com/cgfns-nurses

CGFNS International has secured complementary copies of the book for nurses who applied for its VisaScreen® service in 2009

as a special promotion. Emails have been sent to those who are eligible for this promotion earlier this week.

Foreign-educated nurses comprise approximately 10% of the U.S. nursing workforce. The challenges they face in pursuing their dreams to practice in the United States range from leaving their home countries to obtaining a U.S. work visa, attaining licensure and employment in the United States, understanding and communicating within the U.S. health care system and adjusting to a new life.

Based on 30 years of providing credentials evaluation and verification services pertaining to the education, registration and licensure of nurses and health care professionals worldwide, CGFNS International teamed with Springer Publishing Company to publish this guide for foreign-educated nurses who seek to practice in the United States. CGFNS International CEO



BREAKING NEWS

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Becoming a nurse in the United States

The two main programs that CGFNS offers that are required by the majority of the U.S. Boards of Nursing in order to obtain registration/ licensure as a nurse in the United States are the Certification Program and the Credentials Evaluation Service. A third program is geared specifically towards New York State and is called the Credential Verification Service for New York State.

Licensure requirements differ from state to state and do change over time. Therefore, we suggest that you contact the board of nursing in the state where you wish to practice to determine their requirements.

It is also necessary to obtain a visa (temporary or permanent) in order to legally work in the United States. Detailed information

regarding visa applications and policies should be obtained from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Please check their web site at www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis.

The USCIS requires the International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate from the International Commission on Healthcare Professions, a division of CGFNS, for registered and practical nurses, physical therapists, speech language pathologists and audiologists, medical technologists, medical technicians, occupational therapists and physicians' assistants seeking a work visa to become employed in the United States.

CGFNS Qualifying Exam® schedule

The CGFNS Qualifying Exam® tests your nursing knowledge/ understanding compared to how it is taught and practiced in the United States. The exam uses objective, multiple-choice and

alternate item type questions designed by testing experts to help predict your likelihood of passing the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®) examination.

Examination date	Deadline for new applications*	Deadline for reapplications*	Deadline to change location/test date
11 November 2009	19 August 2009	16 September 2009	deadline passed

*Application deadlines are firm unless extended by CGFNS. See our Web site at <http://www.cgfns.org/sections/programs/cp/cp-qe.shtml>

FREQUENTLY ASKED Questions

Regarding which program to apply for...

Do I need an International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate if I am a Canadian entering the United States on a Trade NAFTA visa?

Yes. Certificates are required for health care workers entering the United States on permanent and temporary occupational visas, including the Trade NAFTA Visa categories.

I am from a foreign country, but graduated from a college in the United States. Do I still need to apply for VisaScreen®?

Yes. Although your professional education was completed in the United States, the purpose of the VisaScreen® program is to provide a screening program which meets all federal requirements for international health care professionals seeking a work visa in the United States, irrespective of where the professional education was completed. However, there is a streamlined process for foreign-born health care professionals educated in the United States.

I am a foreign-educated health care professional who is seeking to obtain permanent residence status based on my relationship (e.g., spouse or minor) to a U.S. citizen. Do I need to obtain an International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate?

No. Foreign-educated health care professionals who seek permanent residence status based on their relationship to an American citizen are not subject to Section 343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 and do not need to obtain an International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate.

I am a nurse who holds a CGFNS certificate. Do I still need to apply for the International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate?

Yes. The International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate is required for all health care professionals (except physicians) who are seeking an immigrant visa or a change in status to permanent residency. One of the requirements of the VisaScreen® program is that nurses must have passed either the CGFNS Qualifying Exam® or the NCLEX-RN® examination. Since you already have the CGFNS certificate, you will not have to take another nursing exam to obtain your visa, and your transcripts on file may be used for the educational evaluation element of the VisaScreen® program.

What is the difference between a CGFNS certificate and the International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate?

The International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate is a result of successful completion of the VisaScreen® program, which meets all federal requirements for certain health care professionals seeking work visas in the United States.

The CGFNS certificate is the result of successful completion of the Certification Program, which meets state board of nursing licensure and federal occupational visa requirements. It is designed specifically for first-level, general (registered) nurses seeking licensure in the United States.

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General questions...

What health care professions does CGFNS/ICHP certify?

Under the current United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) regulations, CGFNS/ICHP can certify registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech language pathologists and audiologists, medical technologists, medical technicians and physicians' assistants.

Who is ICHP?

The International Commission on Healthcare Professions is a division of CGFNS International. CGFNS launched the division in 1996 to administer its VisaScreen® program, which is a federally-approved screening program for foreign health care workers seeking a visa to work in the United States.

How do I contact CGFNS regarding a specific question I have about my application?

We want your application process to be pleasant. Here are some hints that may help you obtain the service you need:

- Use our 24-hour automated phone service, +1 (215) 599 6200, to verify receipt of documentation and examination scores, confirm application status and access other information.
- Have your CGFNS ID number and birth date ready.
- Make use of the many resources on our Web site, including applications, forms and using the online application system, CGFNS Connect. In addition, check out our FAQ section under Tools in the navigation menu on our Web site for answers to questions on specific subjects.
- Applicants who wish to speak with a customer service representative should call +1 (215) 349-8767 between 8am to noon, Monday through Friday, U.S. Eastern Time. Call volumes peak on Mondays and on the first two business days of each month. Please plan accordingly and call on another day or at another time, if possible.
- If you wish to visit our office in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, call +1 (215) 222 8454 to schedule a 30-minute appointment on Wednesdays from 10am to 2pm, U.S. Eastern Time.
- Send us a message! Use the [Contact Us](#) form on the Web site for application questions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED Questions

regarding my documents...

Must I submit my original documents for review?

CGFNS accepts legible photocopies of secondary school documents for evaluation. However, CGFNS will only accept original verification documents from issuing agencies. All validation of license/registration/certification and your post-secondary (tertiary) school's academic records/transcripts must come directly from the issuing authority to CGFNS. In addition, since CGFNS verifies credential authenticity, CGFNS maintains the right to validate any documentation with the source agency.

How will I know if my school(s) and registration authority(ies) have sent my credentials to CGFNS International?

Upon receipt of each document, CGFNS International will send an email or a letter notifying you about any documents that were received and any documentation that is still needed. You may also check your status online at Login-Check Your Status <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/login.jsp> by entering your username and password.

It's very difficult for me to obtain documents from my country. Is it possible for me to send a copy of my transcripts or licenses to your office?

No. Your school(s) and/or licensing authority(ies) need to send the information directly to CGFNS International in order to verify authenticity.

What should I do if my educational institution has closed or the agency that issued my license is no longer in existence?

CGFNS only accepts certain documentation from source agencies (such as academic records/transcripts and license/registration/certification validation). If your school or licensing agency has closed or no longer operates, you will need to contact the organization or agency authorized to hold documentation for that institution (such as a ministry of health or the national, provincial

or state licensing authority in that country). If you are uncertain about who to contact, please call the CGFNS Customer Service Department.

Once my documents are submitted for review, can they be returned to me?

No. Once documents are received, they become the property of CGFNS International.

What should I do if my academic records/transcripts or license/registration/certification are in a language other than English?

Documents not in English need to be accompanied by a word-for-word English translation sent directly from the schools and registration authorities. Translations should also include a Certification of Accuracy (please see instructions in the application handbook). If the school or registration authority cannot provide word-for-word translations, CGFNS International can provide this service for a fee.

I already applied for or have been certified by the Certification Program. Must I submit any other documentation for the Credentials Evaluation Service?

The documentation required for the Certification Program differs from that required by the Credentials Evaluation Service. It will be necessary for you to request a full academic transcript from your foreign school listing each course you completed during your professional training, since the Certification Program does not require a full transcript and one may not have been provided by the school. If you are uncertain about the documentation CGFNS International has on file and what you may need to submit or request, call the Customer Service Department for more information.

regarding which program to apply for...

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What is the difference between the CGFNS certificate and the CES report?

The CGFNS certificate is for first-level, general (registered) nurses and is given after passing the CGFNS Qualifying Exam[®] as well as the English language proficiency portion of the program. It is required as a prerequisite for licensure by some U.S. states. Passing the CGFNS Qualifying Exam[®] portion of the Certification Program predicts a nurse's likelihood of passing the NCLEX-RN[®] examination. The CES report summarizes a health care professional's credentials based on an evaluation of their educational/professional credentials and does not require passing the CGFNS Qualifying Exam[®]. The CES report may be required as a prerequisite for licensure by those U.S. states that do not require the CGFNS certificate.

CGFNS published new book for nurses

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Barbara L. Nichols, DHL, MS, RN, FAAN, and CGFNS International Director of Global Research and Test Administration Catherine R. Davis, PhD, RN, serve as editors for the book.

Diana J. Mason, PhD, RN, FAAN, writes in the foreword: "This book is a must read for every nurse who is contemplating migrating to the United States. I know of no better resource for you, even if you're not yet certain that you want to go to the United States."

FREQUENTLY ASKED Questions

Regarding English language exams

Can CGFNS International give any consideration when the English score is only one point away from passing?

No.

What are the passing English scores required for VisaScreen®?

HEALTH CARE PROFESSION	ETS OPTION 1*			ETS OPTION 2*			ETS OPTION 3*		IELTS OPTION 4	
	TOEFL PBT TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PAPER-BASED TEST	TWE TEST OF WRITTEN ENGLISH	TSE TEST OF SPOKEN ENGLISH	TOEIC TEST OF ENGLISH FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION LISTENING AND READING TEST	TWE TEST OF WRITTEN ENGLISH	TSE TEST OF SPOKEN ENGLISH	TOEFL IBT TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTERNET-BASED TEST TOTAL	TOEFL IBT TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE INTERNET-BASED TEST SPEAKING SECTION	IELTS INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM OVERALL	IELTS INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM SPOKEN BAND
Registered Nurse	540	4.0	50	725	4.0	50	83	26	6.5 (Academic)	7
Practical/Vocational Nurse	530	4.0	50	700	4.0	50	79	26	6.0 (General) or 6.0 (Academic)	7
Physical Therapist	560	4.5	50	–	–	–	89	26	–	–
Occupational Therapist	560	4.5	50	–	–	–	89	26	–	–
Speech Language Pathologist	540	4.0	50	725	4.0	50	83	26	6.5 (Academic)	7
Audiologist	540	4.0	50	725	4.0	50	83	26	6.5 (Academic)	7
Clinical Laboratory Scientist (Medical Technologist)	540	4.0	50	725	4.0	50	83	26	6.5 (Academic)	7
Clinical Laboratory Technician (Medical Technician)	530	4.0	50	700	4.0	50	79	26	6.0 (General) or 6.0 (Academic)	7
Physician Assistant	540	4.0	50	725	4.0	50	83	26	6.5 (Academic)	7

*ETS (Educational Testing Service) administers the tests shown in Options 1, 2 and 3.

Note: Combining passing test scores from both IELTS and ETS administered tests is not acceptable.

International Standards for Professional Nurses program introduces first test dates

The International Standards for Professional Nurses program was developed through a joint effort between The HHRDC in the People's Republic of China and CGFNS International in the United States. It includes administration of the CGFNS Qualifying Exam® for first-level, general nurses in China as a way to strengthen nursing education and practice in China.

The program consists of two components: an initial status verification of first-level, general nurses followed by an examination to assess nursing knowledge.

Those nurses residing in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong and Macao who wish to participate in the program must have graduated from a government-approved nursing school and must have their status as a first-level, general nurse verified.

Nurses who meet this requirement will take a one-day, written examination, the CGFNS Qualifying Exam®, that tests nursing

knowledge and understanding using objective, multiple-choice and alternate-item-type questions designed by nursing testing experts. This exam has been administered worldwide since 1977 to foreign-educated nurses who wish to practice in the United States. It satisfies the examination component of both the CGFNS Certification Program and VisaScreen®.

The International Standards for Professional Nurses program online registration system can be found at www.hhrdc.com.

Dates and deadlines

Test date	Application deadline
11 November 2009	30 September 2009

