



Pan-Canadian
Framework of
Guiding
Principles

&

Essential
Components for
IEN Bridging
Programs

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Preamble

This national framework for bridging programs was developed through consultation with stakeholders across the country involved in the education, registration, and employment of Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs). The Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) defines a nursing bridging program as any program designed to address gaps and/or differences in education and competencies, so that an internationally educated nurse may become registered to practice in Canada, and successfully integrate into the Canadian healthcare system. The framework is based on the best practices identified in an environmental scan and literature synthesis of Canadian bridging programs, literature on bridging programs for other internationally educated health professionals, and the expertise of the stakeholders. This framework outlines best practices to be carried out by the bridging program separated into the educational unit responsible for delivering the program (faculty, administration, etc.) and the educational program (curriculum, course content, etc.). The guiding principles are generalized value statements, while the essential components are a detailed roadmap, outlining how the educational unit and program can deliver best practices.

Guiding Principles

Effective Bridging Programs:

- Assist IENs to meet registration requirements as determined by the Registered Nurse or Licensed Practical Nurse regulatory body and facilitate successful integration into the Canadian healthcare system.
- Recognize the uniqueness of the IEN learner while building on their capacity for learning to prepare them for subsequent employment in the Canadian healthcare system.
- Establish collaborative partnerships with relevant stakeholder groups.
- Provide a safe learning environment, in which culturally competent faculty use teaching approaches that are appropriate for a diverse, multicultural group of learners.
- Are appropriately resourced.
- Have easily accessible and transparent program information.
- Have an evaluation framework, results of which are used to inform program changes.

Essential Components – Educational Unit

Admission Requirements

- The bridging program provider confirms that the applicant has completed a nursing program.
- The applicant/graduate demonstrates language proficiency consistent (English or French) with regulatory body requirements where they exist.
- The applicant's competencies are assessed prior to, or as part of, admission to the bridging program.

Administration

- Establish advisory groups that include relevant stakeholders.
- Form partnerships with the provincial/territorial regulatory body, employers, and local settlement organizations.
- Provide IENs with a clear roadmap detailing what is expected from them, and what they can expect from the program.
- Be transparent about all costs involved in participating in the bridging program (e.g., tuition, books, equipment, etc).
- Develop an evaluation framework that reflects the national framework of guiding principles and essential components (see below for further details), results of which are used to inform program change.
- Seek program approval/recognition from the provincial/territorial regulatory body where approval/recognition processes exist.
- Establish an effective communication strategy to disseminate information about the program to all stakeholders.
- Share information about best practices and innovations with other institutions.
- Apply the principles of cultural competency.
- Become mentors to other faculty members with less experience educating IENs.
- Act as facilitators instead of gatekeepers, focusing on success and lessening the anxiety of learners.
- Advocate for IENs.
- Encourage learners to use official nursing regulation exam preparation resources.

Essential Components – Educational Unit

Resources

- Implement a business model that includes coordination with stakeholders to ensure effective use of resources and sustainable funding.
- Provide proper organizational supports (e.g., labs, faculty, clinical placements, class room space, equipment, IT, access to counseling/support services, resources for faculty development, institutional resources, etc.).
- Share information about financial supports (e.g., bursaries, settlement agency funding, etc.) with IENs.
- Provide referrals to local ESL programs as needed.
- Ensure faculty have Canadian LPN (for LPN bridging program)/RN (for RN bridging program) clinical experience.
- Provide faculty with access to resources that support their professional development (e.g., attending IEN Educators Conference, CASN Faculty development modules).
- Share resources (where possible) between educational units.

Delivery

- Respond and adapt to changes in the IENs, the nursing regulation exam, and nursing practice in Canada.
- Offer the program so that it may be completed in a timely fashion.
- Collaborate with the IEN to develop and implement individualized learning plans based on competency assessment.
- Reduce redundancy as much as possible while still meeting individual and program needs.
- Offer flexible delivery options (e.g., online learning, distance education) where appropriate to promote accessibility.
- Provide face-to-face time and training when offering online courses, so that the technology is well understood by faculty and learners.
- Connect learners with mentors.

Essential Components - Educational Program

Curriculum and Course Content

- Guide program curricula by national and provincial/territorial entry-level competencies.
- Prepare nurses through curricula to meet:
 1. the entry-to-practice competencies; and
 2. the standards of nursing practice (including legal and ethical issues).
- Emphasize a culture of professional practice in Canadian nursing throughout bridging programs, or deliver as a separate course.
- Weave professional communication development into all courses (i.e., not basic French/English language training).
- Provide learners with an understanding of the Canadian healthcare system, current trends and issues, and the nurses' role.
- Emphasize the role of evidence based research and decision making, and accountability in nursing practice.
- Emphasize the development of critical thinking and clinical judgment skills (i.e., identifying cause and effect relationships, distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant data, etc.).
- Address learning needs identified by the analysis of appropriate trends in nursing practice, information/research (e.g., nursing regulation exam results).
- Use a variety of evaluation methodologies.

Essential Components-Educational Program

Pedagogy

- Establish a philosophy statement that reflects the national framework of guiding principles for IEN bridging programs.
- Use a variety of teaching methodologies to promote the application of nursing theory into clinical practice.
- Incorporate the IENs previous education and experience into the learning environment.

Clinical

- Make nursing clinical placements available to the IENs.
- Establish small clinical group sizes with a maximum of eight IEN learners to one instructor.
- Ensure that the clinical site is prepared to work with IENs.
- Support preceptors working with IENs.
- Offer clinical experience at placement sites that are supportive of IEN learners.





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Please note that the project participants and methodology for developing this Framework are described in the Final Report on the Pan-Canadian Framework of Guiding Principles and Essential Components.