



Pan-Canadian
Framework of
Guiding
Principles

&

Essential
Components for
IEN Bridging
Programs

Self
Assessment
Guide

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What is the Pan-Canadian Framework of Guiding Principles and Essential Components for IEN Bridging Programs Self Assessment Guide?

The Self-Assessment Guide is a tool designed to help bridging programs assess their current policies and practices against the recommended essential components outlined in the *Pan-Canadian Framework of Guiding Principles and Essential Components for Internationally Educated Nurse (IEN) Bridging Programs*. The process of self-assessment provides the opportunity for continuous improvement by:

- determining the areas requiring more detailed review and follow-up,
- establishing priorities, and
- developing action plans to address the areas needing improvement.

The Guide is intended to be administered collaboratively by individuals responsible for delivering bridging programs (faculty, administration, etc.) and those individuals responsible for the development of the programs (curriculum, course content, etc.). It can also be completed in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders in your jurisdiction.

Pan-Canadian Framework of Guiding Principles and Essential Components for IEN Bridging Programs

The Framework for IEN bridging programs was developed through consultation with stakeholders across the country involved in the education, registration, and employment of IENs (Registered Nurses, Registered/Licensed Practical Nurses). 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. It 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 more detailed guidelines, outlining how the educational unit and program can deliver best practices.

Definition of a Nursing Bridging Program

A nursing bridging program is any program designed to address gaps and/or differences in education and competencies so that the internationally educated nurse may become registered to practice in Canada, and facilitates successful integration into the Canada healthcare system.

Guiding Principles of the Framework

Guiding Principles

Effective Bridging Programs:

1. 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.
2. Recognize the uniqueness of the IEN learner while building on their capacity for learning to prepare them for subsequent employment in the Canadian health care system.
3. Establish collaborative partnerships with relevant stakeholder groups.
4. Provide a safe learning environment, in which culturally competent faculty use teaching approaches that are appropriate for a diverse, multicultural group of learners.
5. Are appropriately resourced.
6. Have easily accessible and transparent program information.
7. Have an evaluation framework, results of which are used to inform program changes.

How to use the Self-Assessment Guide

There are four steps to conduct the self-assessment of the bridging program¹:

1. Gather documentation and score measures using the scale outlined below.
2. Identify and analyze the strengths and areas for improvement.
3. Prioritize the areas of improvement.
4. Develop an action plan on the results of the process and ensure that the necessary improvements are made.

¹ National Association of County and City Health Officials. Organizational Self Assessment Guide. Retrieved September 20, 2011 from <http://chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/FA2944CC-58C2-4E11-97CB-AD428CD5B71D/0/OrganizationalSelfAssessmentGuideFINAL2.pdf>.

Assessment Scale

A list of the areas for improvement will emerge once the self-assessment is complete. Prioritization of these areas for improvement will be the responsibility of the bridging program.

The self-assessment process is an iterative process and should be repeated at regular intervals (e.g., every three years or at program reviews) to ensure the current practices of bridging programs align with the *Pan-Canadian Framework of Guiding Principles and Essential Components for Internationally Educated Nurse (IEN) Bridging Programs*.

Using the scale below, score each recommended essential component based on your self-assessment of your bridging program's ability to achieve the essential component.

Score	Description
0	No achievement. The bridging program does not achieve the recommended essential component for the element.
1	Partial achievement. The bridging program partially achieves the recommended essential component for the element.
2	Full achievement. The bridging program systematically addresses the recommended essential component for the element.

The items listed as "Documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met" provide examples of documentation and types of activities to consider as a reference in determining whether that essential component is achieved. It is recommended that you record the documentation and activities that demonstrate the assessment of the essential component. You can choose to document proposed/planned actions that may be implemented to address the essential components that are not achieved.

Educational Unit

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
Admission Requirements	The bridging program provider confirms that the applicant has completed a nursing program		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral letter from regulatory body • Letters of direction from the regulatory body 	
	The applicant/graduate demonstrates language proficiency (English or French)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Placement Tool (LPT) scores • Referral letter from regulatory body • Nationally accepted standards of assessment of language proficiency for nursing are used when assessing the language proficiency of candidates • Completion of institutional English assessment that is deemed comparable to regulatory body requirements 		
Administration	The applicant's competencies are assessed prior to admission to the bridging program		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant's competencies are assessed by the regulatory body or equivalent organization prior to admission • Referral letter from the regulatory body for applicant's competency evaluation • Letter of direction outlining theory and clinical elements to be eligible for registration 	
	Establish advisory groups that include relevant stakeholders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference for Advisory Groups • Agendas and minutes of meetings • Stakeholder survey/focus groups to assess process and outcome of advisory groups 	
	Form partnerships with the		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference of partnerships • Agendas and minutes of meetings 	

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
	provincial/territorial regulatory body and local settlement organizations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation reports of partnerships • List of existing partnerships and their status (where feasible) 	
	Provide IENs with a clear roadmap detailing what is expected from them, and what they can expect from the program		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website content and information outlining learning objectives of program • IEN survey results • Testimonials from graduates • Scheduled information sessions and/or individual face-to-face interviews with IENs • Curriculum map is provided to IENs 	
	Be transparent about all costs involved in participating in the bridging program (e.g., tuition, books, equipment, etc.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the costs of the bridging program (i.e., tuition, bursaries, financial aid, books, equipment) is publicly available either through brochures, website, etc. • IEN survey results 	
	Develop an evaluation framework that reflects the <i>Pan-Canadian Framework of Guiding Principles and Essential Components</i> , results of which are used to inform program change		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled and published results of the evaluation of the bridging program conducted • Action plans for changing the program based on evaluation results • Process for evaluation defined 	
	Seek program approval/recognition from the provincial/territorial		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of approval from provincial/territorial regulatory body (where approval processes exist) 	

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
	regulatory body where approval processes exist		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented communication strategy outlining the key messages, tactics, target audiences, and timelines for the dissemination of information is in place and continuously reviewed and revised 	
	Establish an effective communication strategy to disseminate information about the program to all stakeholders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge about best practices and innovations is shared with other institutions through website posting, written journal articles, presentations, etc. 	
	Share information about best practices and innovations with other institutions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of principles of cultural competency is available Education sessions on how to use the principles are provided to faculty Program incorporates principles into the curriculum 	
	Apply the principles of cultural competency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “How to mentor” guiding principles are made available to staff Mentors are identified and partnered with less experienced faculty members Less experienced faculty members have access to a mentor and/or resources for information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty survey report Teaching – learning guides for faculty Orientation program for new faculty
	Become mentors to other faculty members with less experience educating IENs			

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
	Act as facilitators instead of gatekeepers, focusing on success and lessening the anxiety of learners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website information about the program • IEN survey report • Identify “at risk” IENs and provide referrals to resources/supports as pathways to success 	
	Advocate for IENs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IENs are able to communicate their issues and concerns to the school • IEN survey report [use results to identify trends and share with stakeholders to influence change at a variety of levels (internal & external)] • Program coordinator/manager is available to provide academic advising 	
	Encourage learners to use official nursing regulation exam preparation resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners have access to nursing regulation exam preparation resources on website and/or hard copy • Nursing regulation exam preparation resources are incorporated into program (where feasible) 	
Resources	Implement a business model that includes coordination with stakeholders to ensure effective use of resources and sustainable funding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented business model • Coordination of services • Documented sustainability through financial statements • Intakes are adjusted 	
	Provide proper organizational supports (e.g., labs, faculty, clinical placements, class		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of organizational supports • Information about organization support is provided on website • Access to learning labs, low and high fidelity simulation 	



Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
	room space, equipment, information technology, access to counseling/support services, resources for faculty development, institutional resources, etc.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy online access to library and research databases • Access to language supports, academic writing, clinical placement agreements • Process for “at risk” student assessment • Individual disabilities assessment is available • Financial aid is available 	
	Share information about financial supports (e.g., bursaries, settlement agency funding, etc.) with IENs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the financial supports available to IENs is provided to IENs together with application/registration documents • Access to information about the financial supports is available in handouts and on website • Availability of financial supports is communicated to IENs through media vehicles (e.g., on school’s website, documentation at office, e-mail) • Process for applying for aid is clear and expedient • Experts are available to assist applicant with requirements 	
	Provide referrals to local English as a second language (ESL) programs as needed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IENs have access to information about local ESL programs through website and handouts • Faculty have access to information about local ESL programs through website and handouts • Faculty is encouraged to provide referrals to local ESL programs as needed 	

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
	Ensure faculty have Canadian LPN (for LPN bridging program)/RN (for RN bridging program) clinical experience		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A referral process is in place for “at risk” IEN’s 	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty demonstrates their Canadian clinical experience for LPN (for LPN bridging program)/RN (for RN bridging program) through a variety of methods including curriculum vitae (CV), references, interview, etc. • Program can provide documentation of faculty screening process (e.g. simulated clinical teaching situation) • Faculty survey to assess faculty’s Canadian clinical experience for LPN (for LPN bridging program)/RN (for RN bridging program) • Annual faculty performance reviews • Faculty CV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School continuously communicates opportunities for professional development to faculty through various media • School provides time for continuous development for faculty • School encourages faculty to undertake/enroll in programs for continuous professional development • Faculty survey report • Faculty CV • Faculty certificate of attendance at IEN Educators Conference • Faculty completion of CASN faculty development modules on their employment file or CV

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
	Share resources (where possible) between educational units		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Events and/or meetings are convened to permit knowledge sharing and transfer between educational resources ● Agendas and minutes of meetings 	
Delivery	Respond and adapt to changes in the IENS, the nursing regulation exam and nursing practice in Canada		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information/data collection is undertaken to identify needs and trends in the IENS, nursing regulation exam and nursing practice in Canada ● Records of events/meetings are convened to permit knowledge exchange and sharing of needs and trends (e.g. meeting with regulatory body to review new standards for nursing practice) ● Faculty survey report regarding program changes ● Evaluation of programs to incorporate changes in nursing practice, IENS' needs, nursing regulation exam ● IEN survey to understand if needs are being met by bridging program ● Graduate survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curriculum is reviewed to ensure program completion within a reasonable time frame ● Bridging program is compared to other similar programs to review content and time allocation ● IEN survey report on the strengths vulnerabilities and areas of improvement of program ● Statistics - average length of time from start to finish of bridging programs

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of completion rates from past graduates to assess if program length is reasonable in comparison to other programs 	
	Collaborate with IEN to develop and implement individualized learning plans based on competency assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of meetings when input from IEN was obtained; IEN is involved in the development of their learning plan with program IEN survey to assess their involvement in developing their learning plan, that the learning plan is clear, and that the learning plan is reasonable and achievable • Audit of IEN file to ensure learning plan is developed • Learning plan includes frequent reviews to assess how the plan is being implemented, its successes and challenges 	
	Reduce redundancy as much as possible while still meeting individual and program needs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging program is reviewed to assess if it is meeting the learners' needs, changes in the nursing practice, nursing regulation exam changes • Individual course learning outcomes are reviewed to reduce duplication • Faculty reviews • Meeting minutes to review program for redundancy • Reports that include assessment results and documented improvements to program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website information is available • List of delivery methods is available • IEN survey results report • Faculty survey results report • Easy to use learning platform is used

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Proposed actions to address gaps
	promote accessibility		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty/student, student/student interaction is incorporated into online learning • Faculty have e-learning training • Help desk for technical issues is available • Access to program resources is available online 	
	Provide face-to-face time and training when offering online courses, so that the technology is well understood by faculty and learners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of training and development workshops/events and/or tutorials to inform faculty about online courses including, the use of the technology for teaching purposes • Faculty involved with online courses is required to take training sessions (where feasible) • Records of information sessions and/or tutorials held for learners to understand the process and application of online courses 	
	Connect learners with mentors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of identifying mentors exists • Record of mentor matches (mentors are identified and connected to learners) • IEN learners report having access to a mentor in the IEN survey • Report on mentor follow up and evaluation to monitor use of mentorship program 	

Educational Program

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Actions proposed to address
Curriculum and course content	Guide program curricula by national and provincial/territorial entry-level competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the assessment of program curricula against the national and provincial/territorial entry-level competencies • Curricula reflect the national and provincial/territorial entry-level competencies through meeting minutes, reports, etc. 		
	Prepare nurses through curricula to meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the entry-to-practice competencies; and • the standards of nursing practice (including legal and ethical issues) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting minutes/report when curricula were assessed to ensure that the entry-to-practice competencies and standards of nursing practice are incorporated • Statistics related to the success on nursing regulation exam following completion of bridging program • Statistics related to the success on jurisprudence exam where available 		
	Emphasize a culture of professional practice in Canadian nursing throughout bridging programs, or deliver as a separate course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum review and report 		
	Weave professional communication development into all courses (i.e., not basic French/English language training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum review and report • Evidence of academic writing / research competencies 		

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Actions proposed to address
	Provide learners with an understanding of the Canadian healthcare system, current trends and issues, and the nurse's role		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEN survey results report • Employer survey indicate the IENs were sufficiently prepared for Canadian practice 	
	Emphasize the role of evidence based research and decision making, and accountability in nursing practice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum review and report • Faculty survey results report • IEN survey results report • Program evaluation report • Learning outcome includes academic writing and research 	
	Emphasize the development of critical thinking and clinical judgment skills (i.e., identifying cause and effect relationships, distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant data, etc.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program evaluation report • Curriculum review and report 	
	Address learning needs identified by the analysis of appropriate trends in nursing practice, information/research (e.g., CRNE/CPNE results)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on analysis of trends • Report/meeting minutes demonstrate current and new knowledge in nursing practice and information/research is incorporated into the bridging program courses 	

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Actions proposed to address
	Use a variety of evaluation methodologies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation plan is implemented on a regular basis defined by the bridging program • Evaluation report 	
Pedagogy	Establish a philosophy statement that reflects the <i>Pan-Canadian Framework of guiding principles for IEN bridging programs</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program philosophy statement • Statement is communicated to all stakeholders 	
	Use a variety of teaching methodologies to promote the application of nursing theory into clinical practice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program evaluation report • Faculty survey report • Annual faculty performance review • Use of low/high fidelity simulation, laboratory sessions included in courses, evaluation included high level competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEN survey related to the development of their learning plan • The plan demonstrates that the IEN's previous education was reviewed and incorporated into their learning plan • Faculty survey results report • Meeting minutes, reports to demonstrate that course format is modified as necessary to incorporate the IEN's education and experience in the learning environment

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Actions proposed to address
Clinical	Make nursing clinical placements available to the IENs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process to encourage sharing of nursing experience as a teaching tool • Report demonstrating that the bridging program secures clinical placement opportunities for IENs • Process for clinical placements is clear and accessible to all IENs • Variety of media (e.g., websites, brochures, posters, etc.) communicate clinical placement opportunities 	
	Establish small clinical group sizes with a maximum of eight IEN learners to one instructor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on clinical placements 	
	Ensure that the clinical site is prepared to work with IENs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report that identifies the number of orientation sessions provided to IENs for the clinical sites • Clinical sites are required to participate in one orientation session about IENs to understand the background of IENs and working with IENs • Report indicates that information about IENs and working with them is available to clinical sites through a variety of media (e.g., website, brochures, etc.) during placement is available • Feedback mechanism is available to the clinical site on IEN experience 	

Element	Recommended Essential Components	Score	Examples of documents and/or activities that demonstrate the essential components have been met.	Actions proposed to address
	Support preceptors working with IENs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is available to preceptors to guide/advise on how to work with IENs • Former preceptors who worked with IENs are available to offer guidance for current preceptors • Report indicates that information sessions and/or tutorials are provided to preceptors and potential preceptors to understand and share information about issues, best examples of working with IENs • Communication process for “at risk” students is established and clear 	
	Offer clinical experience at placement sites that are supportive of IEN learners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation that clinical placement incorporates the IEN learning plan • IEN survey results report • Faculty survey results report • Clinical placement is provided with information about IENs • Clinical site has demonstrated support of IENs by employing program graduates 	



The background of the image shows a close-up view of a dark brown wooden railing with a curved top rail and vertical supports. Behind the railing is a dense wall of green leaves and branches, suggesting a forest or a well-maintained hedge. The lighting is soft, creating a calm and natural atmosphere.

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