

1. The Complete U.S. RN Licensure Roadmap

Your journey begins with understanding the process

Becoming a registered nurse in the United States involves several separate organizations. Understanding who handles each step helps you avoid confusion, unnecessary payments, and delays.

You do not need to understand everything on the first day. Begin by identifying your current stage and the requirements that apply to you.

Step 1: Identify the state where you want to become licensed

Start with the nursing regulator for your intended state. Read its instructions specifically for internationally educated nurses.

Before paying application or evaluation fees, confirm:

- Whether your nursing education meets its requirements.
- Which credential-evaluation or verification service it accepts.
- Whether it requires an English examination.
- Whether additional coursework, background checks, or other documents are needed.
- Whether any identification or Social Security number requirements affect your application or license issuance.

Do not choose a state only because a friend applied there. Your education, circumstances, and intended place of work may be different.

Step 2: Make a personal document checklist

Organize your nursing diploma, transcripts, license information, identification, and any name-change documents. Use the receiving organization's checklist—not a general internet checklist—as your final reference.

Keep a private record of application numbers, submission dates, payments, missing items, and follow-up messages. Keep your own access to your email and

Step 3: Complete the required education review and state application

Follow your state's instructions about the order of these activities. Some tasks can proceed together; others depend on earlier approvals.

An evaluation report does not itself give you permission to take the NCLEX. The nursing regulator determines your eligibility.

Step 4: Register for the NCLEX-RN

Your state licensure application and your Pearson NCLEX registration are separate. Once you have registered with Pearson and the nursing regulator confirms eligibility, you receive an **Authorization to Test—ATT**. You can then schedule within its validity dates. [Official NCLEX registration pathway](#)

Step 5: Prepare, take the examination, and confirm your license

Study while your documents are being processed. After the examination, complete any outstanding state requirements and confirm that your license has actually been issued before representing yourself as licensed in that state.

Keep immigration planning separate

A nursing license, permission to take the NCLEX, and permission to work in the United States are different matters. If immigration-related screening is relevant to you, read the VisaScreen guide and obtain qualified advice about your situation.

Your next action: Write down your target state, what you have already completed, and the next requirement you need to confirm.