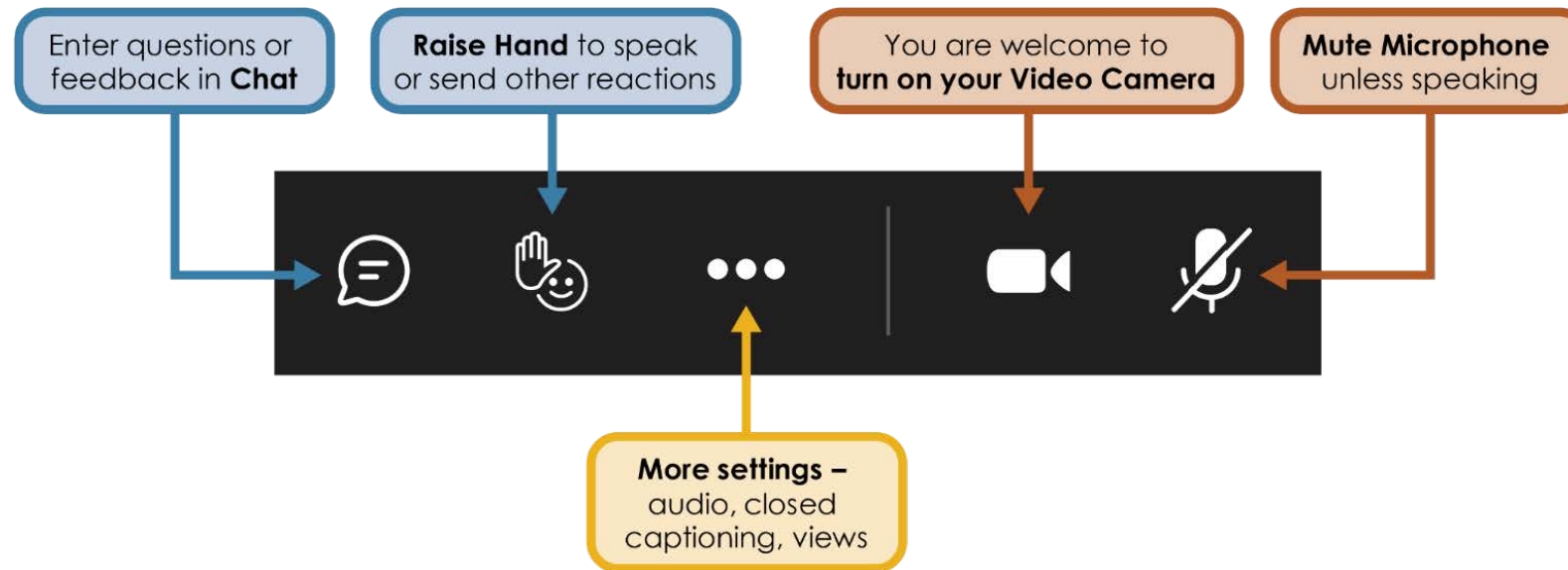




# RN/LPN Licensing and Continuing Competency Rulemaking

Jessilyn Dagum, Policy Analyst

# Zoom Features We Will Use Today



# Meeting Reminders

- Be mindful and respectful of all those in attendance.
- Please raise your hand to speak and staff will call on you to share.
  - State your name before speaking.
  - Speak clearly and audibly.
  - Keep your mic muted unless asked to share.
- Please be mindful of the time and allow others the opportunity to speak.
- Please stay on topic.

# Phase 1: RN/LPN Licensing and CC Rules

The Washington State Board of Nursing (board) is considering amendments to WAC 246-840-015 through 246-840-260 to:

- 1. Clarify and update outdated language;**
- 2. Rewrite and reformat existing rules to reflect current best practices; and**
- 3. Restructure sections as necessary**

The purpose of this rulemaking is part of the board's 5-year formal rule review process in accordance with RCW 43.70.041. The board is conducting this review in a phased approach. This rulemaking is Phase 1 of the board's formal review process.

# Specific Objectives

1

Simplify Barriers  
for Multistate  
Licensure  
Applicants

2

Reduce Barriers  
for Applicants  
Educated Outside  
the United States

3

Explore limiting  
NCLEX Attempts  
Before  
Remediation

4

Incorporate  
Legislative  
Updates

# **Reduce Barriers for Applicants Educated Outside the United States**



# Summary of Feedback



## Aligning with NCSBN Model

**Rules:** Support for aligning WA rules with national standards.



**Challenges with English Proficiency Exams:** Cost, accessibility, and varying types of tests.



## Impact on Workforce and

**Licensure:** Testing requirements delay licensure and impact workforce shortages.



**Alternative Pathways to Demonstrate Proficiency:** Work experience in another health profession role (1,000+ hours) could be an alternative.

# NCSBN Model Rules

## **Chapter 5.3 Application for Licensure by Examination as an RN or LPN/VN**

h. For an applicant who is a graduate of a prelicensure education program not taught in English, passage of an English proficiency examination that includes the components of reading, speaking, writing and listening.





# NCSBN 2023 Licensure Survey

- 59 Jurisdictions were included in the report



2023 Licensure Survey

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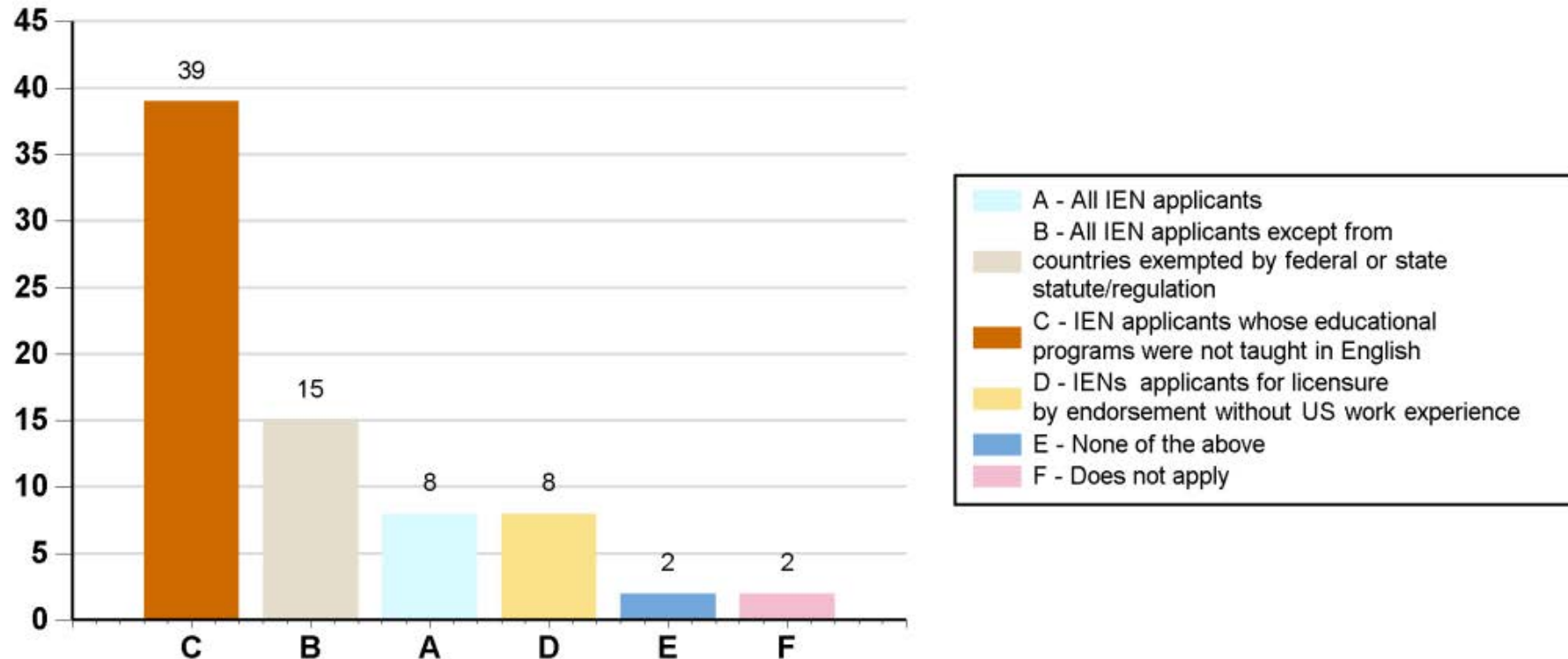
## 59 Jurisdictions Included in the report:

|                                 |                          |                      |                     |                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Alabama (AL)                    | Alaska (AK)              | American Samoa (AS)  | Arizona (AZ)        | Arkansas (AR)      |
| California-RN (CA-RN)           | California-VN (CA-VN)    | Colorado (CO)        | Connecticut (CT)    | Delaware (DE)      |
| District of Columbia (DC)       | Florida (FL)             | Georgia (GA)         | Guam (GU)           | Hawaii (HI)        |
| Idaho (ID)                      | Illinois (IL)            | Indiana (IN)         | Iowa (IA)           | Kansas (KS)        |
| Kentucky (KY)                   | Louisiana-PN (LA-PN)     | Louisiana-RN (LA-RN) | Maine (ME)          | Maryland (MD)      |
| Massachusetts (MA)              | Michigan (MI)            | Minnesota (MN)       | Mississippi (MS)    | Missouri (MO)      |
| Montana (MT)                    | Nebraska-AP (NE-APRN)    | Nebraska (NE)        | Nevada (NV)         | New Hampshire (NH) |
| New Jersey (NJ)                 | New Mexico (NM)          | New York (NY)        | North Carolina (NC) | North Dakota (ND)  |
| Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) | Ohio (OH)                | Oklahoma (OK)        | Oregon (OR)         | Pennsylvania (PA)  |
| Rhode Island (RI)               | South Carolina (SC)      | South Dakota (SD)    | Tennessee (TN)      | Texas (TX)         |
| Utah (UT)                       | Vermont (VT)             | Virgin Islands (VI)  | Virginia (VA)       | Washington (WA)    |
| West Virginia-PN (WV-PN)        | West Virginia-RN (WV-RN) | Wisconsin (WI)       | Wyoming (WY)        |                    |

0 Jurisdictions not included in the report due to non-response:



**Q42. Do you require proof of passage of an English proficiency examination from any of the following internationally educated applicants (IENs)? (Check all that apply.)**



| Responses  | Jurisdictions   | Number of Boards | Percentage of Boards Responding |
|--|---|------------------|---------------------------------|
| All IEN applicants   | AS, GU, IN, MI, MS, RI, UT, WV-PN   | 8                | 14%                             |
| All IEN applicants except from countries exempted by federal or state statute/regulation | AK, AR, IA, MD, MO, NC, NH, NV, OH, OK, VA, VT, WA, WV-RN, WY   | 15               | 26%                             |
| IEN applicants whose educational programs were not taught in English                     | AK, AL, AZ, CA-RN, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, KS, KY, LA-RN, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, NE-APRN, NH, NJ, NM, OR, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, VI, VT, WI, WY | 39               | 67%                             |
| IENs applicants for licensure by endorsement without US work experience                  | GA, MD, NE, NE-APRN, NJ, NV, OK, WA   | 8                | 14%                             |
| None of the above  | LA-PN, MT   | 2                | 3%                              |
| Does not apply   | CA-VN, CNMI   | 2                | 3%                              |



# WAC 246-840-045

**Initial licensure for registered nurses and practical nurses who graduate from an international school of nursing.**

(1) Registered nurse and practical nurse applicants educated in a jurisdiction which is not a member of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and applying for initial licensure must:

(c) Demonstrate English language proficiency by passing a commission approved English proficiency examination at a commission designated standard, or provide evidence directly from the school of earning a high school diploma or college degree from a United States institution prior to commission approval to take the national licensing examination. Individuals from Canada (except for Quebec), United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Island, and U.S. Virgin Islands will have this requirement waived.





# WAC 246-840-090

## Licensure for nurses by interstate endorsement.

Registered nurse and practical nurse applicants for interstate endorsement may be issued a license without examination provided the applicant meets the following requirements:

(4) An applicant graduating from a nursing program outside the U.S. shall demonstrate English proficiency by:

(a) Passing a board-approved English proficiency test if the nursing education is not in one of the following countries: Canada (except for Quebec), United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and U.S. Virgin Islands; or

(b) Completing 1,000 hours of employment as a licensed nurse in another state. The 1,000 hours of employment must be in the same licensed role as the nurse is applying for licensure in Washington state. Proof of employment must be submitted to the board; or

(c) Providing evidence directly from the program of earning a high school diploma or college degree from a United States institution.



# Board Approved English Proficiency Exams

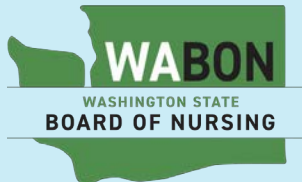
1. **Test of English as a Foreign Language ([TOEFL](#), IBT)**
  - Passing LPN score: 79 with a speaking score of 26 (institution code: 7292)
  - Passing RN score: 84 with a speaking score of 26 (institution code: 7292)
2. **International English Language Testing System ([IELTS](#), academic version)**
  - Passing LPN and RN score: 6.5 with a score of 6.0 in listening, reading, writing, and speaking.
3. **The Occupational English Test ([OET](#))**
  - Passing LPN and RN scores:
    - Minimum score of 300 in listening, reading and writing.
    - Minimum score of 280 in speaking.

4. **Michigan English Test ([MET](#))**
  - Passing LPN and RN scores:
    - Minimum score of 55 overall
    - Minimum score of 55 in speaking
5. **Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN)**
  - The minimum required scores for CELBAN are as follows:
    - Listening: CLB 9
    - Reading: CLB 8
    - Writing: CLB 7
    - Speaking: CLB 8

# Uniform Licensure Requirements for a Multistate License

An applicant for licensure in a state that is part of the eNLC will need to meet the following [uniform licensure requirements](#):

3. Has passed an English proficiency examination (applies to graduates of an international education program not taught in English or if English is not the individual's native language)



Uniform Licensure Requirements for a Multistate License



## Requirements:

An applicant for licensure in a state that is part of the eNLC will need to meet the following uniform licensure requirements:

1. Meets the requirements for licensure in the home state (state of residency);
2. a. Has graduated from a board-approved education program; or  
b. Has graduated from an international education program (approved by the authorized accrediting body in the applicable country and verified by an independent credentials review agency);
3. Has passed an English proficiency examination (applies to graduates of an international education program not taught in English or if English is not the individual's native language);
4. Has passed an NCLEX-RN® or NCLEX-PN® Examination or predecessor exam;
5. Is eligible for or holds an active, unencumbered license (i.e., without active discipline);
6. Has submitted to state and federal fingerprint-based criminal background checks;
7. Has not been convicted or found guilty, or has entered into an agreed disposition, of a felony offense under applicable state or federal criminal law;
8. Has no misdemeanor convictions related to the practice of nursing (determined on a case-by-case basis);
9. Is not currently a participant in an alternative program;
10. Is required to self-disclose current participation in an alternative program; and
11. Has a valid United States Social Security number.



# Licensure Comparison Chart

| Washington Single-State License  | Washington Multistate License (MSL)   |
|--|---|
| Allows practice in Washington State only.  | Allows practice in Washington state and 40 other participating compact states.  |
| <b>Initial single-state license fee:</b><br>RN: \$138<br>LPN: \$93   | <b>Initial multistate license fee:</b><br>RN: \$203<br>LPN: \$158   |
| <b>Annual single-state renewal fee:</b><br>RN: \$138<br>LPN: \$93  | <b>Annual multistate renewal fee:</b><br>RN: \$158<br>LPN: \$113  |
| <b>Initial License by Endorsement Requirements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Application and fee</li> <li>•Graduate of a BON approved nursing education program</li> <li>•Verification of an active license in another US state and passing NCLEX results</li> <li>•FBI fingerprint background check (if out of state address)</li> </ul> | <b>Initial License by Endorsement Requirements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Application and fee</li> <li>•Graduate of a BON approved nursing education</li> <li>•Verification of an active license in another US state and passing NCLEX results</li> <li>•FBI fingerprint background check</li> <li>•Valid US Social Security Number</li> <li>•WA State must be primary state of residence (PSOR)</li> <li>•Must not be a participant in an alternative to discipline program or have ever been convicted of a felony.</li> <li>•Must meet all <a href="#">Uniform Multistate License Requirements</a>.</li> </ul> |

# Discussion

# 1. Should the board maintain or remove the English Proficiency Exam (EPE) requirement for applicants educated outside the US?

**Note:** The board cannot remove this requirement from RN/LPN compact licensure as it is required by the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). RN/LPN multistate licensure applicants educated outside the US must take an EPE under the Uniform Licensure Requirements (ULR).

The board could use the same language as the ULRs for a single licensure standard or offer a separate standard for Washington only.

**2. If the board chooses to maintain the English Proficiency Exam requirement (for both single-state and multistate licensure), should the board align with the national standard (NCSBN model rules)?**

Instead of exempting applicants from specific countries, the board would only require an EPE from applicants whose nursing education program was not taught in English.

### 3. How can we make this requirement more accessible?

#### Suggestions we've heard so far:

- Lower passing scores
- Passage of the NCLEX
- Allow for “super scoring” – to retake only those elements of the exam that did not meet the passing score
- RN Refresher Program as an alternative exception
- 1,000+ work hours in another health profession rule in another US state or US territory.
- Offer a restricted license

# Next Steps

- Subscribe to the board's GovDelivery messaging system for the latest rulemaking announcements.
- Review the workshop materials prior to the next rule workshop

Questions? Email [WABONRules@doh.wa.gov](mailto:WABONRules@doh.wa.gov)

# Upcoming Rule Workshops

- **February 13 from 5 - 6 PM (Evening): Limiting NCLEX Attempts Before Remediation**
- February 21 from 1 - 2:30 PM: Review WAC 246-840-015 through 260
- February 25 from 3:30 - 5 PM: Review WAC 246-840-015 through 260
- February 27 from 3 - 4:30 PM: Review WAC 246-840-015 through 260
- March 4 from 3 - 4:30 PM: Review WAC 246-840-015 through 260