



COLLEGE OF  
**LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES**  
OF ALBERTA

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# Policy

## Substantial Equivalence

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Approved: September 18, 2020



**This document is linked to legislation:**

[Health Professions Act](#)  
[Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation](#)

**This document is linked to other documents that direct expectations of professional behaviour or requirements for practice:**

[Standards of Practice](#)  
[Standards of Practice on Restricted Activities and Advanced Practice](#)  
[Code of Ethics](#)  
[Competency Profile](#)  
[Advanced Practice Perioperative Nursing](#)

**This document is linked to related supportive documents:**

**REVISIONS and UPDATES**

*The legislative mandate of the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA) is to serve and protect the public by ensuring its members deliver safe, competent and ethical nursing care. A CLPNA Policy outlines requirements and expected behaviours that will be monitored and enforced.*

Approval Date    September 18, 2020  
Approver        Council



**INTRODUCTION** All LPNs are responsible and accountable for adhering to the *Health Professions Act (HPA)*, the *Licensed Practical Nurses Profession Regulation (LPN Regulation)*, *Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada*, *Standards of Practice on Restricted Activities and Advanced Practice* and the *Code of Ethics for Licensed Practice Nurses in Canada*. These documents establish the foundation of LPN professionalism in the provision of practical nursing services.

This policy on substantial equivalence aligns with section 28(2) of HPA and section 9 of the LPN Regulation. These two sections describe how applicants can apply for substantial equivalence through providing evidence to the Registrar or designate of competence in the practice of practical nursing for registration.

**PURPOSE** The purpose of this document is to explain the requirements for substantial equivalence, describe the assessment process, and outline the potential results of the substantial equivalence process.

**POLICY** An assessment for substantial equivalence determines whether the education, experience, or qualifications of an applicant are substantially equivalent to LPN education in Alberta.

All applicants will be considered for substantial equivalence if they do not meet the requirements through approved education. This policy does not provide an exhaustive list of situations where an applicant will be considered for substantial equivalence; however, it provides the most common situations where substantial equivalence will be assessed.

Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) may apply for substantial equivalence to receive a practice permit to practice as an LPN in Alberta. LPNs may also apply for substantial equivalence to receive advanced authorization for an area of advanced practice.

## Application

When applying for substantial equivalence to practice in Alberta as an LPN or to practice in an area of advanced practice the applicant must:

1. Fill out the substantial equivalence application form
2. Pay for any applicable fees for the substantial equivalence application (see the [fee schedule](#) for any applicable fees)
3. Provide evidence of the curriculum from their education, their job description, and related experience
  - i. The applicant may be asked by the Registrar or designate to provide other documentation to support the application for substantial equivalence
  - ii. The applicant may be required to submit a self-assessment of their competencies if the Registrar or designate determines it is needed to determine substantial equivalence

Once the Registrar or designate receives the application, they will assess the evidence provided by the applicant to determine if the applicant's education, experience, and qualifications are substantially equivalent to the standards of the CLPNA's Council for a practice permit or for advanced authorization for an area of advanced practice.

## Assessment

The assessment of an application includes reviewing the applicant's submitted education curriculum and job description for competencies outlined in the Competency Profile.

IENs are assessed for substantially equivalent competencies in entry-level practical nurse education outlined in the Competency Profile.

LPNs applying for advanced authorization in an area of advanced practice are assessed for substantially



equivalent competencies in advanced practice competencies outlined in the Competency Profile.

If needed, the applicant may be asked to complete a self-assessment to help the Registrar or designate further determine substantial equivalence.

### Possible Outcomes

#### For IENs

For IENs, there are three possible outcomes based on the assessment for substantial equivalence by the Registrar or designate:

1. The applicant obtains a provisional practice permit
  - The applicant is registered as an LPN and is placed on the provisional register until they pass the Canadian Practical Nurses Registration Examination.
2. The applicant must complete additional training, education, or other conditions before they may obtain a provisional practice permit
  - The Registrar or designate determines there is a gap in the applicant's education, experience, or qualifications. The Registrar or designate may require the applicant to take additional training, education, or examination prior to receiving a provisional practice permit.
  - Generally, the Registrar or designate allows applicants a year to complete the required training or education before closing the file. However, applicants may request additional time to fulfill the requirements for a practice permit under certain circumstances.
3. The applicant's application for substantial equivalence is denied
  - The applicant does not receive a practice permit because their education, experience, or qualifications do not meet the requirements for substantial

equivalence. If these applicants wish to become an LPN in Alberta they must complete a practical nursing program and reapply.

An applicant may appeal the decision of the Registrar or designate to the Registration Council Appeal Committee. Specific information about the appeal process will be found in the decision letter.

#### For Areas of Advanced Practice

For LPNs applying for substantial equivalence for an area of advanced practice there are three possible outcomes based on the assessment by the Registrar or designate:

1. The applicant receives advanced authorization for the area of advanced practice
  - The authorization is indicated on the LPN's practice permit.
2. The applicant receives advanced authorization for the area of advanced practice but has conditions placed on the practice permit that restrict practice
  - The authorization and any conditions of restriction are indicated on the LPN's practice permit. For example, a condition of restriction may indicate a specific nursing practice.
3. The applicant's application for substantial equivalence is denied
  - If the applicant wishes to obtain advanced authorization in the future, they can complete Council approved education in an area of advanced practice and then apply for advanced authorization. [Approved education](#) can be found on the CLPNA website.

**CONCLUSION** IENs and LPNs may apply for an assessment of substantial equivalence based on their education, experience, or qualifications.



This document outlines the requirements for substantial equivalence, how to apply for substantial equivalence, and the potential outcomes for a substantial equivalence assessment.

If after reading this document you have questions about substantial equivalence, please contact the CLPNA's Registration Department via email at [registration@clpna.com](mailto:registration@clpna.com), or by phone at 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).