

Nursing Graduates Nursing Licensure Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the difference between a GN & RN?

A graduate **nurse** is a student who has completed the nursing education requirements for an RN, but has not taken the NCLEX-RN to obtain a license. Christiana Care Health System (CCHS) and the Delaware Board of Nursing do allow GNs to work professionally under the direct supervision of a registered **nurse** while waiting to take the NCLEX-RN.

What is the timeline to get a license in DE?

If your application is in order, the Board office will make you eligible to test when the official transcript from your school arrives. Generally with no complications, you should allow 4-6 weeks for the application process for an RN license or GN Permit in Delaware.

What can I do to get the process started before I graduate?

- You can complete your criminal background check before your graduate. Background checks are valid for 6 months. Allow at least four weeks for results once completed (8-12 weeks in NJ)
- You can complete the application, but will need to wait to ask that the official transcript be sent until after you graduate.

What do I need to do to become an RN once I have graduated from Nursing School?

You'll need to pass the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) in order to practice as a RN. *Research shows that students who take the test soon after graduating, have higher success rates—something to keep in mind when scheduling your exam.* Here are a few things you'll need to do before taking it:

- Make sure you've met the eligibility requirements and then submit an application to the board of nursing where you want to be licensed.
- After you apply, you'll get an Authorization to Test letter, from the board, that you'll need in order to register for the exam.
- Register with Pearson VUE and then schedule your exam.
- Familiarize yourself with the NCLEX test plan and find your test site.

I live in another state (i.e. PA) and have planned to take the NCLEX in PA. What steps will I need to complete to get a license in DE?

If you apply in your home state and it is not a compact state, you need to wait for the license to be issued once you've passed the test. Then, you can apply for a Delaware license by endorsement (see website). Processing time varies significantly between states so you may want to consider taking the NCLEX through Delaware if eligible. (If you live in a compact state, you are required, however, to take your NCLEX in your home state and apply for your RN license there¹).

Does it matter where I take the NCLEX? Can this be changed?

Yes, it does. You want to take your NCLEX in the state where you will be living and working.

¹ MD is the exception—DE has an arrangement to provide eligible MD residents with GN Permits

What if I am a Maryland resident and new grad? Which license will I get?

If you live in a compact state, you would need to apply for your license in your permanent residence—home—state and then you can work in Delaware through your compact license. The Delaware Board of Nursing, however, is able to provide a GN permit to Maryland residents who are applying for a compact license, as long as they have proof of a job offer, successful background check and proof of a scheduled NCLEX testing date.

Can I work under a GN permit from another state in DE?

No, you cannot work in Delaware under a GN permit from another state. If you are a resident from a compact state, you would need to apply for your license in your home state and then you can work in Delaware. The exception is that MD residents who will be working in Delaware are able to obtain a DE GN permit as long as you have proof of job offer, successful background check, and proof of a scheduled NCLEX test date.

Typical time lines for obtaining licensure in NJ/NY/PA/MD and links for more details:

NJ: (6-8 weeks); <http://www.fastaff.com/obtaining-your-new-jersey-state-nursing-license>; Compact: No

NY: (4-6 weeks); <http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/nurse/nursing.htm>; Compact: No

PA: (4-6 weeks); <http://www.nursinglicensure.org/state/nursing-license-pennsylvania.html#rn>; Compact: No

MD: (4-6 weeks); <http://www.nursinglicensure.org/state/nursing-license-maryland.html>; Compact: Yes

I am a new graduate who has submitted my application to both Delaware and the testing company. When will I receive my approval to test (ATT)?

If your application is in order, the Board office will make you eligible to test when the official transcript from your school arrives.

What if I already have registered to test in one state, but now I want to work in DE?

This will not be a problem. You can sit for the test in one state and your results will be good for any application.

I just did background and fingerprints for another state, why can't you use those results?

Because the Delaware Board of Nursing regulations state that the background-check and fingerprint requests are used for the Delaware RN licensure process.

Do I have to obtain my nursing license before I start my residency program?

This decision is still being reviewed by our Nursing Advisory Council, but currently in order to participate in the Christiana Care Health System (CCHS) Nurse Residency Programs, you may have to have one of the following—please confirm with your nursing recruiter:

- a valid Delaware nursing license, or
- a Temporary Delaware License, or
- Authorization from another compact state to work in Delaware

What are the requirements to be eligible for a Delaware GN Permit?

- You have already applied for a Delaware Nursing License
- You have a job offer in Delaware
- Your start date will be before you take the exam

What are the requirements for a new nursing graduate to be eligible for a Delaware Permanent Nursing License?

You have completed the eligible education requirement, completed all the stated requirements and passed the NCLEX exam.

As a new graduate nurse what other requirements are there to obtain a temporary license?

In addition to a job offer and temporary permit fee, proof of meeting the educational requirements is required. The permit is valid for up to 90 days from the date your degree was awarded. However, the permit expires if you are unsuccessful on the NCLEX.

How does the Nurse Licensure Compact State process work?

Your license to practice in the RN role is issued by the state in which you legally reside, and allows you to practice in any other state that is part of the Compact. If you move to a different "Compact state", you must apply for a license from the board in your newly adopted state, and inactivate your license in your former "compact state". You may maintain a license to practice in any other non-compact state. You may not maintain a multi-state license in more than one compact state at a time.

What determines primary residency for licensure purposes in the Nurse Licensure Compact?

"Primary state of residence" is defined by the compact as "the state of a person's declared fixed permanent and principal home or domicile for legal purposes". Evidence of a primary state of residence may be required. Sources used as evidence include, but are not limited to, driver's license, federal income tax return, military payroll documents, and voter registration. If you declare a change in your permanent residence from another compact state, you have 90 days to obtain a license in that state.

Is Delaware a participating Nurse Licensure Compact State?

Yes, participating compact states include:

Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, **Maryland**, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin

When should I file for the NCLEX exam?

- As soon as all required documents are received, reviewed and approved, the Board office will notify Pearson Vue that you are eligible to take the exam *provided you have registered with Pearson Vue*. The Board office cannot make you eligible until you registered.
- If you are eligible, Pearson Vue sends you an *Authorization to Test (ATT)* form by email. If you do not receive an ATT form, contact Pearson Vue. The Board office does not have information about the status of your ATT form.
- If you are *not* eligible, the Board office notifies you.

Important Links:

- **National Council of State Boards of Nursing—NCLEX Guidelines:**
<https://www.ncsbn.org/1268.htm>
- **Delaware Board of Nursing—License Information Guide**
<http://dpr.delaware.gov/infoguide.shtml>
- **Maryland Board of Nursing—**
<http://www.nursinglicensure.org/state/nursing-license-maryland.html>
- **New Jersey Board of Nursing—obtaining a New Jersey Nursing License**
<http://www.fastaff.com/obtaining-your-new-jersey-state-nursing-license>
- **New York Board of Nursing—Nursing**
<http://www.op.nysed.gov/prof/nurse/nursing.htm>
- **Pennsylvania Board of Nursing**
<http://www.nursinglicensure.org/state/nursing-license-pennsylvania.html#rn>