



CASN  
ACCREDITATION  
STANDARDS FOR  
IEN BRIDGING  
PROGRAMS

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## IEN Bridging Program Definition

Any program designed to address gaps and/or differences in education and competencies so that an internationally educated nurse (IEN) may become registered to practice in Canada and successfully integrate into the Canadian health care system. IENs include registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and registered practical nurses (RPNs; this title is used in Ontario only).

## Quality Dimensions

Four overarching quality dimensions guided the development of the accreditation standards and are infused throughout program:

<b>Relevance:</b>	The structure, processes, and constituents of the bridging program are pertinent, appropriate, and responsive to the current and emerging needs of the health care system, the profession, and the IEN learners in the program.
<b>Accountability:</b>	The bridging program takes responsibility and is answerable for all its relationships and actions, and it fosters the integration of the importance of taking responsibility for safe, ethical, and legal professional practice among its IEN learners.
<b>Relatedness:</b>	There is an inter-connectedness of all components of the bridging program that promotes achievements of goals.
<b>Uniqueness:</b>	While the structure, processes, and constituents of the bridging program meet standards of excellence, they embody a unique character reflective of its particular context and are responsive to the uniqueness of the IEN learner.

## Standards, Descriptors, Key Elements, Interpretations

<b>Standards:</b>	represent the quality expectations for bridging programs and are stated broadly. The IEN Accreditation Program has seven standards.
<b>Descriptors:</b>	of each standard provide additional and more specific statements to further delineate them.
<b>Key elements:</b>	specify the observable, qualitative or quantitative indicators that the standard is being met.
<b>Interpretations:</b>	are provided for the key elements of each standard, outlining the types of qualitative and quantitative evidence the bridging program is expected to provide to show how they are achieving the key elements.

## STANDARDS STATEMENTS

<b>STANDARD I</b>	<b>IEN Learner</b>	The program builds on IEN learners' prior knowledge and experience to position them for entry into practice in the Canadian context.
<b>STANDARD II</b>	<b>Partnerships/ Relationships</b>	Collaborative partnerships/relationships with relevant stakeholder groups support the mission and goals of the program and the needs of IEN learners.
<b>STANDARD III</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning</b>	The program facilitates learning among a diverse group of IEN learners in a culturally safe learning environment.
<b>STANDARD IV</b>	<b>Resources</b>	The program is appropriately resourced.
<b>STANDARD V</b>	<b>Communication</b>	The program provides clear, accurate, comprehensive, and accessible program information.
<b>STANDARD VI</b>	<b>Program Evaluation</b>	The program has established and implements an evaluation framework for continuous quality improvement.
<b>STANDARD VII</b>	<b>Program Outcomes</b>	The program prepares IENs for successful integration into the Canadian health care system's nursing workforce.

## STANDARD I — IEN LEARNER

<b>STANDARD STATEMENT</b>	The program builds on IEN learners' prior knowledge and experience to position them for entry into practice in the Canadian context.
<b>Descriptor</b>	The program recognizes the learning needs of each IEN learner and provides a learner-centred program and learner-centred services to build on prior knowledge and experience.
<b>Key Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The curriculum is guided by a philosophy statement that articulates excellence in IEN bridging education.</li><li>2. Individualized learning requirements of each IEN learner are taken into consideration, based on prior and ongoing assessment of their needs.</li><li>3. Recognition and respect for the IEN learner's previous education and experience are incorporated into the learning environment.</li><li>4. Effective strategies are used to focus on competency gaps and reduce prior learning redundancy.</li><li>5. A variety of teaching methods are used to promote the application of nursing theory into clinical practice.</li><li>6. Clinical group sizes are composed of an appropriate IEN learner-to-instructor ratio.</li><li>7. A variety of evaluation methods are used to assess the IEN learner's progress at regular intervals.</li><li>8. The design and delivery of the program fosters completion in a timely fashion.</li></ol>

### Interpretations

#### Standard Interpretation for IEN Learner Key Element Statement 1

- Evidence may include a written philosophical statement with statements about the program goals the faculty aspire to achieve to provide a quality education program. Evidence may also include statements from faculty members, staff, students, and other stakeholders indicating that this philosophy statement is being implemented throughout the program.

### **Standard Interpretation for IEN Learner Key Element Statement 2**

- Evidence includes a written assessment of individual IEN learners that is in place and there is evidence that it is being used.

### **Standard Interpretation for IEN Learner Key Element Statement 3**

- Evidence includes notes of meetings where student education and experience are discussed and written documents exist that provide information about the learners' previous education. Evidence could also include a review of transcripts and the program and results of interviews with students and faculty.

### **Standard Interpretation for IEN Learner Key Element Statement 4**

- There is a process in place for competency assessment and educational strategies designed to reduce the gaps and avoid unnecessary redundancies.

### **Standard Interpretation for IEN Learner Key Element Statement 5**

- Evidence includes a description of teaching methods in the syllabus documents or course outlines and observation of classes.

### **Standard Interpretation for IEN Learner Key Element Statement 6**

- Evidence includes documentation of group size for a sample of clinical groups and observation of group size in the clinical area.

### **Standard Interpretation for IEN Learner Key Element Statement 7**

- Evidence includes the documentation of evaluation methods and evaluation forms that are utilized.

### **Standard Interpretation for IEN Learner Key Element Statement 8**

- Evidence includes student records of date of admission and graduation and statements of the length of the program.

## STANDARD II — PARTNERSHIPS/RELATIONSHIPS

<b>STANDARD STATEMENT</b>	Collaborative partnerships/relationships with relevant stakeholder groups support the mission and goals of the program and the needs of IEN learners.
<b>Descriptor</b>	Program administration maintains a working relationship with the provincial or territorial regulatory body, employers, clinical placement sites, and other relevant stakeholder groups.
<b>Key Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The administration has established advisory groups that include relevant stakeholders.</li><li>2. Effective relationships/partnerships with relevant stakeholders (organizations and individuals) that support the needs of IEN learners.</li><li>3. Collaboration between personnel of the program and personnel of the clinical sites ensure that clinicians are appropriately prepared to support IEN learning.</li></ol>

### Interpretations

#### Standard Interpretation for Partnerships/Relationships Key Element Statement 1

- Evidence includes the minutes and terms of reference for the advisory group and its membership.

#### Standard Interpretation for Partnerships/Relationships Key Element Statement 2

- Evidence includes documentation that identifies how partners support the needs of learners. Evidence also includes statements by stakeholders of the relationship with faculty and staff of the program.

#### Standard Interpretation for Partnerships/Relationships Key Element Statement 3

- Evidence includes terms of reference and minutes of committee meetings and meetings with individuals that address clinical practice issues for IEN students. Evidence also includes documentation of orientation resources and other educational sessions. Evidence also includes testimony from personnel at the clinical sites.

## STANDARD III — TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>STANDARD STATEMENT</b>	The program facilitates learning among a diverse group of IEN learners in a culturally safe learning environment.
<b>Descriptor</b>	The administration, faculty, and support staff of the program have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and qualifications to support IEN learners and foster their growth.
<b>Key Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The administration is respectful of diversity and provides a culturally safe learning environment.</li> <li>2. Faculty members are mentored and supported in their role as educators of IEN learners.</li> <li>3. Faculty act as facilitators, focus on IEN learners' needs and successes, and take cultural and linguistic diversity into account.</li> <li>4. Accessibility of the program is enhanced through flexible delivery options such as online learning, distance education, and part-time programming, while maintaining a face-to-face component.</li> <li>5. Orientation and support are integrated into online courses to ensure that the technology is understood by faculty and IEN learners.</li> </ol>

### Interpretations

#### Standard Interpretation for Teaching and Learning Key Element Statement 1

- Evidence may include interview data that show that administrative staff and faculty hold the students and their backgrounds in high regard. Administrative staff and faculty demonstrate that they are knowledgeable about cultural safety and diversity and there are numerous examples of the implementation of the concepts throughout the program and in the goals of the program. Evidence also includes the existence of written policies to support respectful safe learning.

#### Standard Interpretation for Teaching and Learning Key Element Statement 2

- Evidence includes documented provision of educational, psychological, and financial supports that enhance faculty effectiveness in their roles as teachers of IEN learners. These can include counselling, provision of opportunities and resources for continuing education and opportunities for mentorship, etc.

### **Standard Interpretation for Teaching and Learning Key Element Statement 3**

- Evidence includes direct observation of faculty interaction with learners and documents that show the contributions and successes of students as well as statements from students.

### **Standard Interpretation for Teaching and Learning Key Element Statement 4**

- Evidence includes documentation of delivery options and the syllabi/course outlines.

### **Standard Interpretation for Teaching and Learning Key Element Statement 5**

- Evidence includes documentation of orientation programs and statements from students and from faculty.

## STANDARD IV — RESOURCES

<b>STANDARD STATEMENT</b>	The program is appropriately resourced.
<b>Descriptor</b>	The program has the human, financial, pedagogical, and material resources, as well as information systems and support services to meet its mission and goals.
<b>Key Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The administration of the program collaborates with stakeholders to ensure effective use of resources.</li><li>2. The program provides appropriate supports for learning including labs, classroom space, technology, library services, clinical practice placements, and simulated learning experiences.</li><li>3. The program provides qualified faculty including those with clinical nursing experience in Canadian health services.</li><li>4. Faculty have support in their role and access to resources that promote professional development as educators of IEN learners.</li><li>5. The program has effective and appropriate administrative support persons.</li><li>6. IEN learners have access to support services including counselling, tutoring, community networking, and learning accommodation.</li><li>7. The program provides referrals to local language programs as needed.</li></ol>

### Interpretations

#### Standard Interpretation for Resources Key Element Statement 1

- There is documentation that there is effective use of resources. Interviews with faculty and administration identify where stakeholders are involved in effective use of resources.

#### Standard Interpretation for Resources Key Element Statement 2

- While there may be variation amongst schools on how the program is resourced, there is evidence either through observation or documentation that all the resources required to design, deliver, and execute the program according to its mission and goals are present.

### **Standard Interpretation for Resources Key Element Statement 3**

- Evidence includes faculty CVs demonstrating that all faculty have clinical nursing experience in Canadian facilities such as hospitals, home-care, and community health units.

### **Standard Interpretation for Resources Key Element Statement 4**

- Evidence includes documentation of support provided which might include: having time off for professional development; financial; material; educational or psycho-social supports, etc.

### **Standard Interpretation for Resources Key Element Statement 5**

- Evidence includes statements from faculty and staff that there is appropriate staff and enough administration personnel to ensure the effective functioning of the program. Evidence also includes an organizational chart.

### **Standard Interpretation for Resources Key Element Statement 6**

- Evidence includes documentation demonstrating access to support services as well as statements from students to this effect.

### **Standard Interpretation for Resources Key Element Statement 7**

- Evidence includes documentation regarding the referral process, and there are statements from students they have had effective referrals.

## STANDARD V — COMMUNICATION

<b>STANDARD STATEMENT</b>	The program provides clear, accurate, comprehensive, and accessible program information.
<b>Descriptor</b>	IEN learners and key stakeholders are provided with appropriate information about the program and its processes and expectations.
<b>Key Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The program has established and implements a communication plan to disseminate information about the program effectively to all stakeholders.</li><li>2. IEN learners are provided with program information detailing what is expected of them and what they can expect from the program, including program overview, the program’s mission, values, goals, policies, program delivery modalities, courses outlines/syllabi, and the responsibilities of IEN learners and faculty.</li><li>3. The program provides accurate information about fees for IEN learners, including tuition, books, equipment, ancillary fees, and any other associated expenses.</li><li>4. The program shares information with IEN learners about potential financial supports.</li></ol>

### Interpretations

#### Standard Interpretation for Communications Key Element Statement 1

- Evidence includes a written plan, or a clear process, that articulates names of each of the stakeholders and which also describes the purpose for and mode of communications that are most essential for each one. It may also include newsletters, letters and other communications with the stakeholders including the results of the interviews and minutes of meetings with them.

#### Standard Interpretation for Communications Key Element Statement 2

- Evidence includes written information that is shared with students including those from the school website, student manual, etc. Evidence also includes the results of interviews with students.

**Standard Interpretation for Communication Key Element Statement 3**

- Evidence includes written communications about fees that are shared with students as well as the results of interviews with students.

**Standard Interpretation for Communication Key Element Statement 4**

- Evidence includes written communications about financial supports that are available for students as well as the results of interviews with students.

## STANDARD VI — PROGRAM EVALUATION

<b>STANDARD STATEMENT</b>	The program has established and implements an evaluation framework for continuous quality improvement.
<b>Descriptor</b>	The program implements on-going comprehensive evaluation of program inputs, outcomes, processes, and relevance, and introduces timely improvements based on the analysis of evaluation data.
<b>Key Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The program has developed a comprehensive written evaluation framework.</li><li>2. The evaluation process is continuous and includes data collection from IEN learners, graduates, employers, regulatory bodies, and other relevant stakeholders.</li><li>3. The evaluation monitors the curriculum in relation to the evolving context of the Canadian practice environment.</li><li>4. Evaluation data are used to make timely improvements to the program.</li></ol>

### Interpretations

#### Standard Interpretation for Program Evaluation Key Element 1

- Evidence is provided of an evaluation framework specifying an ongoing comprehensive evaluation process that includes assessment of the curriculum, curriculum delivery, and student outcomes.

#### Standard Interpretation for Program Evaluation Key Element 2

- Evidence includes survey results and the results of other processes that are carried out in accordance with the written evaluation framework and the timelines articulated therein.

#### Standard Interpretation for Program Evaluation Key Element 3

- There is evidence of processes in place to monitor the curriculum in relation to the evolution of the practice environment.

#### **Standard Interpretation for Program Evaluation Key Element 4**

- Data are used to make informed quality improvement in the program. Evidence includes minutes of meetings of the evaluation and/or curriculum committees or some other committee; and reports from students, faculty or administrators of the improvements that have been made to the program.

## STANDARD VII — PROGRAM OUTCOMES

<b>STANDARD STATEMENT</b>	The program prepares IENs for successful integration into the Canadian health care system’s nursing workforce.
<b>Descriptor</b>	The program assists IENs to meet registration requirements as determined by the registered nurse or licensed practical nurse regulatory body, and to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for successful integration into the Canadian health care system.
<b>Key Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The administration of the program confirms that applicants have completed a nursing assessment process approved by a regulatory body.</li> <li>2. Applicants’ competencies are assessed prior to or as part of admission to the program.</li> <li>3. The development of professional communication skills is woven into all courses in the program.</li> <li>4. Graduates demonstrate an ability to communicate appropriately and effectively as professional nurses.</li> <li>5. The program prepares IEN learners to integrate into the culture of professional nursing practice in the Canadian context.</li> <li>6. The curriculum is guided by national and provincial or territorial entry-level competencies.</li> <li>7. The curriculum positions IEN learners to meet entry-to-practice competencies and standards of nursing practice.</li> <li>8. The curriculum emphasizes the role of evidence-informed practice in nursing care.</li> <li>9. The curriculum promotes the application of critical thinking and clinical judgement/reasoning skills.</li> <li>10. The curriculum prepares IEN learners for effective, collaborative interprofessional and intraprofessional practice.</li> </ol>

### Interpretations

#### Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 1

- Evidence may include interview results with the administrator of the program, faculty and students and documentation regarding the written assessments.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 2**

- Evidence includes written documentation regarding the applicants' competencies and the date in which the assessment was carried out.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 3**

- Evidence includes documentation of the goals of the program in the syllabi/course outlines as well as interviews with faculty and students.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 4**

- Evidence includes interview results with faculty, students, graduates from the program and employers. It also includes documentation regarding the results of clinical practice.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 5**

- Evidence includes interviews with graduates, faculty and students identifying opportunities to gain understanding of professional practice in Canada as well as syllabi/course outlines describing the goals and objectives and learning activities in this regard.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 6**

- Evidence includes a written statement of the relation between the curriculum and the entry to practice competencies.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 7**

- Curriculum documents are based on the provincial/territorial entry-to-practice competencies and standards of nursing practice. Interviews with students, graduates, employers, and faculty indicate that the curriculum prepares the students to meet the competencies they require.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 8**

- Evidence includes examples of where the curriculum is guided by evidence. Interviews with students, graduates, and faculty identify that evidence-based practice is understood.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 9**

- Evidence includes the curriculum document and interviews with faculty, students, and graduates. It also includes interviews with staff at clinical sites.

### **Standard Interpretation for Program Outcomes Key Element Statement 10**

- Evidence includes a plan, strategy, or teaching plans for interprofessional and intraprofessional practice that have been implemented along with statements from faculty and students that support this. The evidence needs to be observed in the clinical setting.



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