Competency Based Assessment for Internationally Educated Practitioners

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Promoting Regulatory Excellence

On the menu today...
- Alberta/British Columbia Context
- Brief review:
  - Health Professions Regulation in Canada
  - Substantial Equivalence
- CDBC Registration Process
- Essential Competencies Registration Project
- CARNA & CRNBC Registration Process
- Substantial Equivalence Competence Assessment

Alberta
3.7 million people
Major cities: Edmonton, Calgary
USA neighbor: MT
> 900 Dietitians: 1:4140 people
> 32,000 RNs: 1:116 people

British Columbia
4.5 million people
Major cities: Victoria, Vancouver
USA neighbors: AK, WA, ID, MT
1087 Dietitians: 1:4150 people
> 35,000 RNs: 1:129 people
Health Professions Regulation in Canada

- Health is a provincial jurisdiction
- Provincial Governments designate Health Professions & Regulatory Colleges
- Define regulation of the professions

Colleges are "autonomous"
- Funded by applicant and registrant fees
- Define regulation of the professions
- Regulate Health Professions

"Substantial Equivalence"

"Making a determination about substantial equivalency requires that the applicant has provided evidence satisfied that the requisite competencies have been demonstrated. Sometimes... the decision about equivalency requires that the committee is satisfied that the applicant has provided evidence that the requisite competencies have been demonstrated. Sometimes... the decision about equivalency will require a leap of faith."

Dietetic Education in Canada and BC

- 3.5-4 years BSc in Food, Health and Nutrition or Dietetics
- 3-50 week internship
- Upgrading is possible through formal/online courses and internship programs
- CDBC Registration Process
  - Credential evaluation
  - Assessment of courses, internship, work experience, continuing education...
  - Registration Committee decides if substantially equivalent or not
  - If not, applicant receives a list of required academic/practical training
  - Temporary registration available upon completion of upgrading
  - Eligible to write national Canadian Dietitian Registration Examination
  - Automatic status change to "RD" upon passing examination

Essential Competencies

- Development of Essential Competencies for Dietetic Practice
  - Reflect current dietetic practice
  - Measurable statements of safe, competent and ethical practice
  - Approved by the CDBC Board (2006) as the standard for registration

CDBC Registration Process

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EC Registration Project - Funding

Phase 1: 2007-2008
- BC Ministry of Economic Development, Labour Market Development Branch

Phase 2: 2008-2009
- BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development with a contribution through the Canada-BC Labour Market Agreement

EC Registration Project - Phase 1 Goals

1. Develop a competence self-assessment tool:
   - Compare internationally educated applicants' combined education, practical training and work experience to a recognized standard

2. Develop standardized assessment processes:
   - Document competence efficiently and accurately
   - Based on criteria that are transparent, objective, specific, clear and measurable

Competence Self Assessment (CSA)

Online questionnaire where applicants verify competence and currency relative to the Essential Competencies to Dietetic Practice

Series of 7 self-tests on each dimension of practice
EC Registration Project - Phase 2 Goals

- Develop a supporting tool to:
  - Verify international applicants' self-assessment of competence
  - Identify competence gaps that need to be addressed

Competence Self Verification (CSV)

- Case study format, open questions
- Self-verification and self-scoring:
  - Increased awareness of own competence level
  - Appropriate identification of competence gaps
  - Clear understanding of own learning needs

Dimension 1: Professional Practice - Assumes responsibility and accountability in the provision of competent, safe and ethical professional practice.
Competency 1.0 Practices with professional integrity.
Performance indicator 1.1 Practices in compliance with professional legislation and regulations. May include: Health profession acts, protection for person in care acts, personal directive acts, health information protection acts, freedom of information and protection of privacy acts.

1. Have you performed or had experience using this performance indicator within the last three years?
   o Yes
   o No

2. What level have you most recently performed or had experience using this performance indicator?
   o Under supervision
   o Independently
   o Supervised others
   o No experience

3. Are you able to explain, provide examples, answer questions related to this performance indicator?
   o Yes
   o No

4. Are there any practice areas you need to study or review? Note in space provided below.
CSV Outcomes

CSV verifies self-assessment of competence on the CSA questionnaire.

CSV expedites registration by providing:
- Detailed information on competence gaps and practice areas that need to be addressed
- Recommendations for focused upgrading, tailored to meet individual needs
- Detailed information on competence gaps

CSV expedites registration by providing:
- CSV and CSA are accessible through the CDBC website
- Applicants complete self-assessment and self-verification tools online, from home, at their convenience

Pre-Assessment (Required documents)

Assessment Summary

Competence Self Assessment (CSA)

Competence Self Verification (CSV)

Self-Directed Learning Plan

Assessment Process
Self Directed Learning

- Access to a session with CDBC staff
  - How to use the Assessment Summary and develop a Self Directed Learning Plan
  - Resource list, learning activities and approved courses provided

- Self-determination of readiness to write CDRE

Competence Self Assessment Process

- CSAP reflects professional qualities required of dietitians:
  - Personal responsibility for competent, safe, ethical practice
  - Ongoing competence: self-assessment, self-reflection, self-directed learning
- EC Registration Project Outcomes
  - Enhanced ability of CDBC to:
    • Completing CSAP provides an opportunity for:
      - Internationally-educated applicants to understand, apply and demonstrate these critical practice traits and skills
      - CDBC to assess aspects of practice that were previously hard to assess
    - Ongoing competence:
      - CSAP reflects professional qualities required of dietitians:
      - Enhanced ability of CDBC to:
        • Completing CSAP provides an opportunity for:
          - Internationally-educated applicants to understand, apply and demonstrate these critical practice traits and skills
          - CDBC to assess aspects of practice that were previously hard to assess
EC Registration Project Outcomes

- Enhanced ability of CDBC to:
  - Register qualified international applicants ready to enter the workforce
  - Increase numbers of qualified internationally educated registrants able to serve BC's population
  - Ensure portability of CDBC registrants through labor mobility agreements
  - Facilitate registration through online access

EC Registration Project Outcomes

- Other applications:
  - Framework is easy to update to incorporate developments in dietetic regulation and new practice competencies
  - May be adopted by other Canadian Dietetic Colleges (easily adaptable)
  - Dietitians returning to practice may use the framework to identify areas needing practice competencies
  - Dietitians returning to practice may use the framework to identify areas needing practice competencies
  - Educated registrants able to serve BC's population
  - Other applications:

Competence Self Assessment Process Pilot Results

- 19 internationally-educated applicants
- 3 returning to practice
- 4 applicants left process at SDL stage
- 1 passed the CDRE and registered
- 3 completing SDL
- 2 completing CSA/C Strand
- 8 completed CSA/C Strand
- 11 at application stage

EC Registration Project Outcomes

- Upgrading through labor mobility agreements
- Framework to identify areas needing competence more efficiently and accurately
- Time to register by documenting competence
- Providing access to criteria for registration
- Informing pre-immigration/ pre-registration decisions

EC Registration Project Outcomes

Annual Conference
Nashville, Tennessee
Clear 2010
Competence Self Assessment Process

Pilot Results

- Completion time: 45-90 minutes per case study
- Self correction time: 15-30 minutes per case study
- Challenges:
  - Difficulty self-scoring
  - Difficulty relating Dimensions/Performance Indicators to educational resources

Feedback:
- Positive reaction to whole process
- CSA-CSV challenging at first, but perceived as helpful to identify personalized preparation for CDRE and working as dietitian
- Applicants prefer independent/online study opportunities to formal in-person courses
- To be helpful/motivating

Langara College offers only 8-10 placements per year practical training upgrading
- Disappointment at limited options for practical training upgrading
- Session with CDBC staff and SDL plan found to be helpful/motivating

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- Difficulty self-scoring case study
- Self correction time: 15-30 minutes per case study
- Completion time: 45-90 minutes per case study
Future Directions

Expand the Resource List & Learning

- Give international applicants access to study courses (ongoing)
- Develop a Jurisprudence Handbook and self-access and expedite upgrading (ongoing)
- Add new on-line dietetics courses to increase activities

- Student loan & bursaries for upgrading

Comparison by Sector - CSAP (2009-10)
Future Directions

- Increase placement sites, short term placements, project, volunteering opportunities – Phase 3 project with Langara College
- Link framework electronically
- Monitor online CSAP access
- Report pilot results to government

Questions...

Thank you!

Presenters:
Jean Farrar, CARNA
Lynn Cairns, CRNBC

Promoting Regulatory Excellence
Competency Based Assessment for Internationally Educated Practitioners

Regulation of Registered Nurses

- Protection of the public by ensuring safe and ethical care from competent, qualified registered nurses (RNs)
- Must be registered and licensed with the professional college or association of the province or territory where intended to work
- All applicants write a national exam – Canadian Registered Nurse Examination (CRNE)

Protection of the public by ensuring safe and ethical care from competent, qualified registered nurses (RNs)

Council on Licensure, Regulation, and Accreditation
College & Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA)

- Governing Body: Provincial Council
- 13 elected RNs
- 5 public members appointed by the Minister
- > 32,000 registered members

College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC)

- Governing Body: Board
- 9 elected RNs
- 5 appointed public members
- > 35,000 registrants

Routes to Entry to Practice CARNA and CRNBC

Three routes:

1. Graduate of an approved program undertaken in the Province: baccalaureate entry to practice

2. RN in good standing in another Canadian jurisdiction: or

3. Substantially equivalent competence (SEC): or

Substantially Equivalent Competence (SEC)

- Applicant has a combination of education, experience, practice or other qualifications that demonstrates the competencies required for registration

- Embedded in regulation - CARNA
- Embedded in Act & bylaws - CRNBC
The applicant is assessed for evidence of substantial equivalence relative to established entry to practice competencies. If gaps are found, additional education is required to enable registration.

Why Competency Based Assessment?

Registered Nurses in BC and Alberta are now educated at a baccalaureate level, and Nursing education is focused on graduates. Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) come from a wide variety of education systems and have worked in other countries before looking to work in Canada. How do you measure if an applicant possesses the required competencies and is ready to practice safely to the scope expected in our health care system? Substantially Equivalent Competence (SEC) is assessed for evidence of substantial equivalence relative to established entry to practice competencies. If gaps are found, require additional competencies to meet the established entry to practice expectations.
Why Competency Based Assessment?

- RN competencies are not homogenous around the world.
- Transcripts are dated sources of evidence for current competence to practice.
- Registration verifications and employer references from other countries provide limited information.

What they know is current competence to practice.

The Roots of the SEC Assessment for IENs

- Mount Royal University Research Initiative:
  - Royal University supported by Alberta government funding.
  - Development of the SEC assessment at Mount Royal University.
  - Final project report validated the use of a variety of strategies to assess IENs ability to meet required competencies.

The SEC assessment validated the entry to practice competencies: the specific knowledge, skills, judgment & interpersonal attributes required of all graduates entering practice environment for the first time.

The SEC assessment for IENs has been validated since 2006. CARNA has been utilizing the SEC assessment since 2006. The first time CARNA utilized the SEC assessment was in 2006.
The Next Chapter

Capacity Building for IEN Assessment Project

- Project timeline: Oct/07-Mar/10
- British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut (jurisdictions within the Western and Northern Health Human Resources Planning Forum)
- Ministries of Health and Advanced Education
- Selected post-secondary nursing institutions
- Regulatory colleges
- Good Character
- Competent Practice, Fitness to Practice, and English Language Proficiency
- Education transcripts
- Verification of current and past registrations
- Nursing experience, including currency of registration

When is the SEC Assessment Used?

- Not all IENs undergo the SEC assessment
- Regulatory college determines when the SEC assessment will be required
- Begins with a paper-based process

Assessment of Eligibility for Registration

- Review of completed application and other documents

SEC Assessment
When is the SEC Assessment Used?

- IENs may be required to undergo a competency assessment in situations such as:
  - Not possible to determine from documents or it is unclear that the applicant possesses "substantially equivalent competence"
  - Transcripts not available for review
  - Not able to obtain evidence of nurse registration

What is Involved?

- Regulatory college decides the type(s) of competency assessment required
- Assessment may be required in one or more of the following areas of nursing:
  - Medical/Surgical (general assessment)
  - Maternal/Newborn–Child Health
  - Mental Health

- The applicant is notified that assessment is required and what type
- Information about the assessment process is provided including what to expect and resources for preparation
- Assessments may take from 1 to 5 days depending upon type required
- There is no charge to the applicant for an assessment
- There is no charge to the applicant for assessment
- IEN assessment centers are funded by government
- No charge to the applicant for an assessment
- IENs may be required to undergo a competency assessment in situations such as:
  - Not able to obtain evidence of nurse registration
  - Transcripts not available for review
What is Involved?

- The applicant:
  - chooses whether and when to follow through with the assessment
  - schedules appointment with the IEN assessment centre

- The regulatory college does not make a decision about eligibility for registration until after the assessment.

Competencies assessed reflect generalist education at the baccalaureate level and are organized into six (6) categories:

- Professional Responsibility & Accountability
- Knowledge Based Practice: Body of Knowledge
- Knowledge Based Practice: Competent Application
- Ethical Practice
- Service to the Public
- Self-Regulation
- Written Diagnostic Exams

RN assessors employed and trained by the IEN assessment centres:

- assess applicants using established strategies
- document, analyze, and interpret findings
- prepare a written report for the regulatory college

Five (5) strategies to assess competencies:

- Written Diagnostic Exams
- Clinical Judgment Assessment
- Triple Jump Assessment
- Modified Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)
- Candidate Self-Assessment

RN assessors employed and trained by the IEN assessment centres:

- assess applicants using established strategies
- document, analyze, and interpret findings
- prepare a written report for the regulatory college
Competency Assessment Strategies

Written Diagnostic Exams
- Multiple choice and short answer questions that test general and specialty nursing knowledge

Clinical Judgment Assessment (interview)
- Evaluates ability to:
  - think deliberately and critically through a complex and have no "simple" answer
  - consider possibilities/opptions; make sound judgments in situations that are not "simple"
  - generate a problem list
  - develop an intervention/management plan
  - revise the problem list based on the data
  - apply essential and relevant knowledge

Triple Jump Assessment (interview)
- From a brief client situation:
  - generate a problem list
  - identify and collect relevant data
  - think deliberately and critically through a complex and have no "simple" answer
  - consider possibilities/opptions; make sound judgments in situations that are not "simple"
  - identify and collect relevant data
  - evaluate self-fulfillment, and self-directed learning

Modified Objective Structured Clinical Examination
- Candidate role-plays the nurse and demonstrates competencies:
  - nurse-client interactions and relationships
  - critical thinking and clinical judgment skills
  - health assessment and nursing skills
  - ethical decision making skills
  - assesses knowledge, problem-solving, critical thinking, organizational, client assessment, self-evaluation, and self-directed learning
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Competency Assessment Strategies

Self-assessment

- Opportunity to provide a self-assessment of how they would provide evidence that they meet Canadian professional standards during nursing practice.

Competency Assessment Report

- The report documents whether each competency is:
  - Met
  - Partially Met
  - Not Met

- Descriptive information summarizes and provides more information for partially met and not met competencies.

Eligibility Decision

- The report is sent directly to the regulatory college.

Eligibility decision may be to:

- Approve eligibility to move forward with registration processes.

OR

- Discuss the results of the SEC assessment with the applicant if requested.

Regulatory college:

- Reviews the results of the SEC assessment on all information (application, other documentation, SEC assessment report) to determine eligibility for registration based on how they would provide evidence that they meet Canadian professional standards during nursing practice.

Self-assessment

- Opportunity to provide a self-assessment.
Eligibility Decision may be to:

- Defer eligibility pending completion of education to address competency gaps.
- Deny registration if extensive competency gaps indicate there is insufficient foundation on which to build.

Education to Enable Registration

- In most circumstances, completion of education is required before the applicant is eligible for registration.
- Length can range from 1 day to over a year depending on learning needs.

What Works

- Commitment to shared goals by both the IEN assessment centre and the regulatory college.
- Ongoing relationship.
- Collaboration and joint goal setting.
- Utilizes existing educational institutions.
- May include 1 day workshops, standard theory courses and/or clinical practice.

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- Collaboration and joint goal setting.
- Utilizes existing educational institutions.
- May include 1 day workshops, standard theory courses and/or clinical practice.
Objective, unbiased assessment of ability
- Maintenance of evidence-based assessment tools
- Respectful and fair interactions with applicants

What Works
- Regular meetings between the regulatory college and the IEN assessment centre to ensure timely discussion of issues and joint problem-solving
- Collaboration among the IEN assessment centre, the regulatory college, and government funding departments

All focused on providing infrastructure to:
- Ensure safe, competent, ethical nursing care to the public
- Facilitate IEN success on the CRNE and in the workplace
- Support timely IEN eligibility decisions

What we have learned…
- Importance of English language competence prior to undergoing the assessment
- The need for information for applicants:
  - Why competency assessment is required
  - What is involved; what to expect
  - How to prepare

What Works
- Government funding departments, the regulatory college, and collaboration among the IEN assessment centre
- Joint problem-solving ensure timely discussion of issues and regular meetings between the regulatory college and the IEN assessment centre
- Maintenance of evidence-based assessment tools
- Objective, unbiased assessment of ability
What we have learned…

Critical to discuss and understand the roles and processes of each partner:

- Purpose of the competency assessment
- Information re: applicant to IEN assessment centre
- Information to/ from applicant prior and following assessment

Challenges

- Accessibility of assessment and education for IENs in all locations: offshore remains a challenge
- Funding assistance for IENs
- Awareness and understanding of length of time process can take

But…

It is equally important and essential to have appropriate and accessible education interventions available to address any identified gaps.

Following assessment:

- Information to/ from applicant prior and centre
- Information re: applicant to IEN assessment and assessment centre
- Purpose of the competency assessment
- Identification of gaps
- Able to discuss and understand the roles and processes of each partner:
- IENs
- Assessment Centres

What we have learned…

Challenges

- Operational and funding processes for the IEN
- Streamlining of processes
- Capacity and ability to scale up or down
- Other activities and pressures in each environment
Conclusion

Competency based assessment processes:

- Allow for an enhanced assessment of internationally educated health professionals
- Ensure that any additional education required reflects the learning needs of the individual
- Facilitate the registration of internationally educated health professionals who are prepared for the Canadian workplace
- Support the regulatory college’s mandate to protect the public
- Ensure that any additional education required reflects the learning needs of the individual
- Allow for an enhanced assessment of internationally educated health professionals

Questions...

Thank you!

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