



2010 Annual Educational Conference · September 23-25

Competency Based Assessment for Internationally Educated Practitioners

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Jean Farrar, CARNA

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



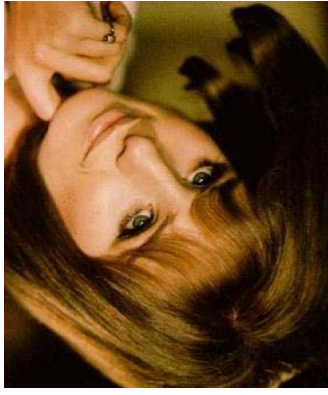
British Columbia

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



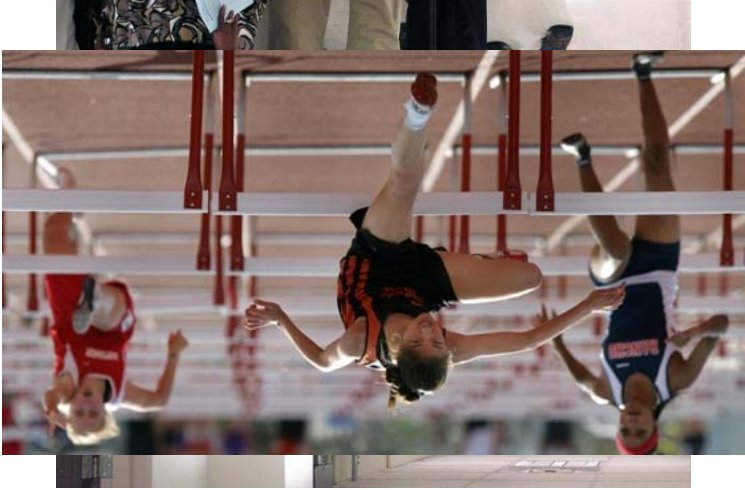
Health Professions Regulation in Canada

- Provincial Governments:
 - Designate Health Professions & Regulatory Colleges
 - Define regulation of the professions
 - Colleges are “autonomous”
 - Funded by applicant and registrant fees



“Substantial Equivalence”

Health Professions Regulation in Canada



“Making a determination about substantial equivalence requires that the ... committee ... is satisfied that the applicant has provided evidence that the requisite competencies have been demonstrated... sometimes... the decision about substantial equivalence will require a leap of faith.”

Glover Takahashi, Susan. A Substantial Equivalency Assessment Framework for the Federation of Regulated Health Professions of Alberta; October 2006, p. 19.

“Substantial Equivalence”

Dietetic Education in Canada and BC

- 3.5-4 years BSc in Food, Health and Nutrition or Dietetics
- 35-40 week internship
- Upgrading is possible through formal/online courses and internship programs

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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 upgrading

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CDBC Registration Process

- Temporary registration available upon completion of upgrading
- Applicant can work using "RD(t)"
- Eligible to write national Canadian Dietetic Registration Examination
- Automatic status change to "RD" registration once pass examination

Essential Competencies

- Development of the 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

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EC Registration Project - Phase 1 Goals

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



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

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

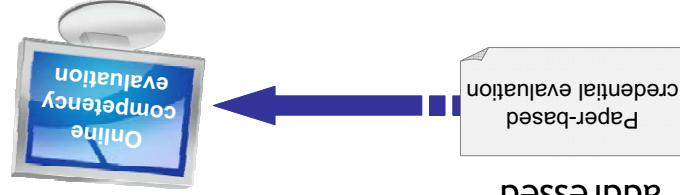


Competence Self Assessment (CSA)

- 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)

- Each case study question is cross-referenced to the dimensions of practice, competencies and performance indicators
- Underscores the relationship between competencies/ performance indicators to practice

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 protection 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?
 - Yes
 - No
2. What level have you most recently performed or had experience using this performance indicator?
 - No experience
 - Observed
 - Under supervision
 - Independently
 - Supervised others
3. Are you able to explain, provide examples, answer questions related to this performance indicator?
 - Yes
 - No
4. Are there any practice areas you need to study or review? Note in space provided below.

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

A dietitian works at the Countryside Hospital which is in a rural setting. As the Nutrition & Foodservices Manager, the dietitian is responsible for the management of the Nutrition & Foodservices Department, provision of client care to both in- and out-patients, as well as providing community nutrition services. The hospital has 30 acute care and 70 long term care beds.

The dietitian receives a referral to see Mrs. W, who is a 72 year old woman who was admitted to hospital after falling and breaking her hip. Surgery was not required, but she was admitted to hospital. It was determined that Mrs. W was 168 cm tall and weighed 68 kg. Two months earlier when she visited her physician, it was noted that her weight was 72 kg. The weight loss was unplanned.

While completing a nutrition assessment, the dietitian learned that Mrs. W lives by herself in a senior's apartment complex. Dinner is available in the apartment complex dining room on a daily basis; tenants are responsible for all their breakfast, lunch and snacks. Mrs. W has typically preferred to eat a small dinner in her apartment, often feeling too tired and weak to go to the dining room.

Mrs. W wears dentures and prefers food items that are soft or easy to chew. Overall, she been fairly healthy and takes medication on a daily basis for cholesterol control.

Laboratory tests reveal the following results:

Custom image

1. a) Comment on the results of Mrs. W's biochemical analysis.*

1. b) Calculate Mrs. W's BMI and comment on the results.*

CSV Outcomes

- CSA and CSV are accessible through the CDBC website
- Applicants complete self-assessment and self-verification tools on-line, from home, at their convenience

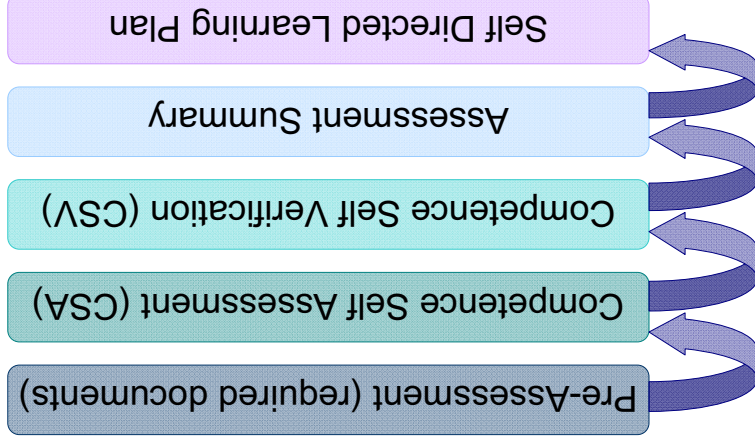


- CSV verifies self-assessment of competence on the CSA questionnaire
- CSV expedites registration by providing:
 - Detailed information on competence gaps and practice areas that need to be addressed
 - Recommendations for focused upgrading, tailored to meet individual needs

CSV Outcomes



Competence Self Assessment Process





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



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



EC Registration Project Outcomes

- Enhanced ability of CDBC to:
 - Recognize qualifications through self-assessment of education, practical training and work experience
 - Identify substantial equivalence or “gaps” with Canadian academic and internship education
 - Facilitate the integration of international applicants into dietetic practice



Competence Self Assessment Process

- 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

- 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 upgrading

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Competence Self Assessment Process Pilot Results

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

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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

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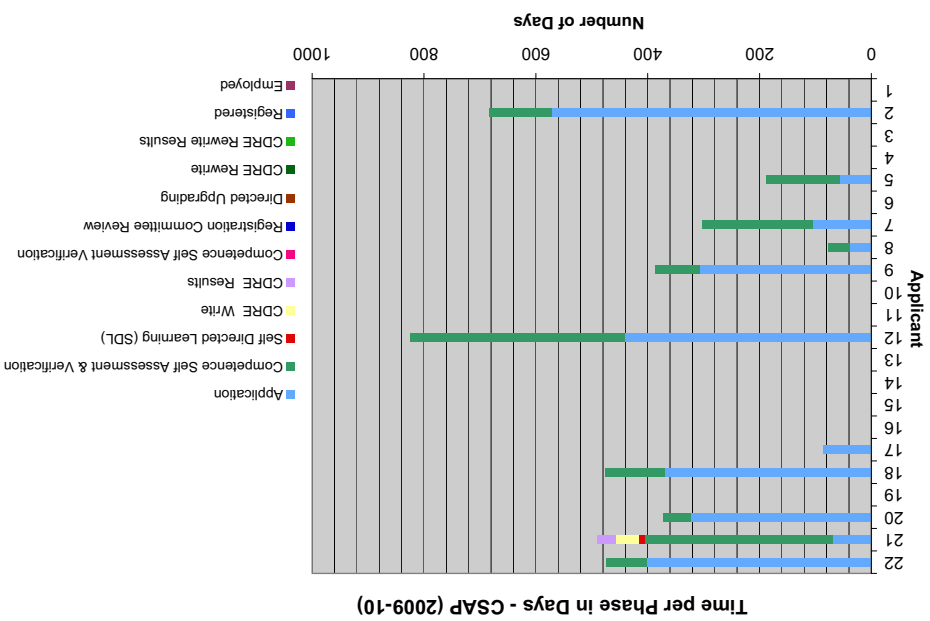
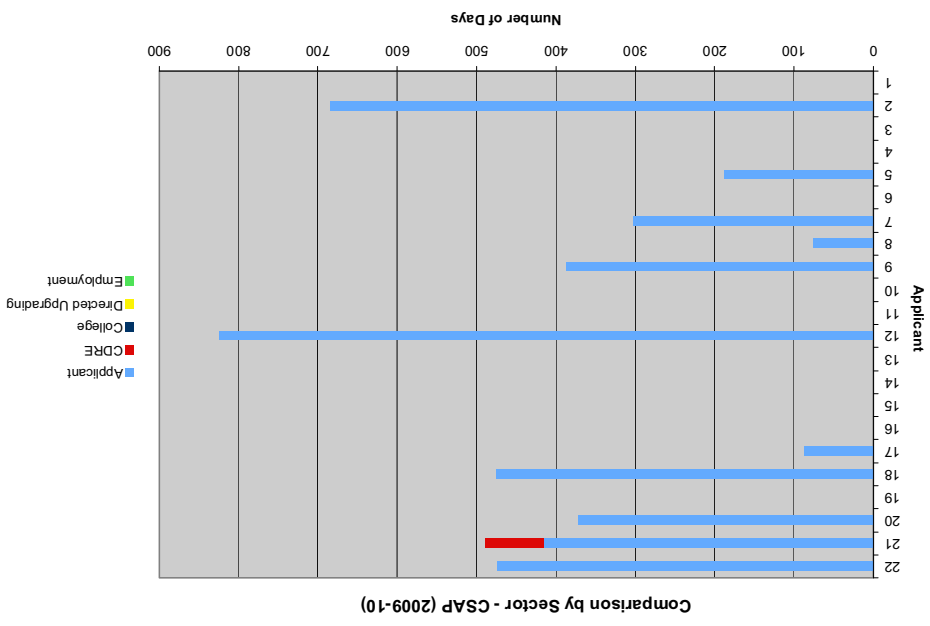
EC Registration Project Outcomes

- Enhanced ability of CDBC to:
 - Facilitate registration through online access
 - ↑ time to register by documenting competence more efficiently and accurately
 - ↑ satisfaction with assessment process by:
 - providing access to criteria for registration
 - informing pre-immigration/ pre-registration decisions

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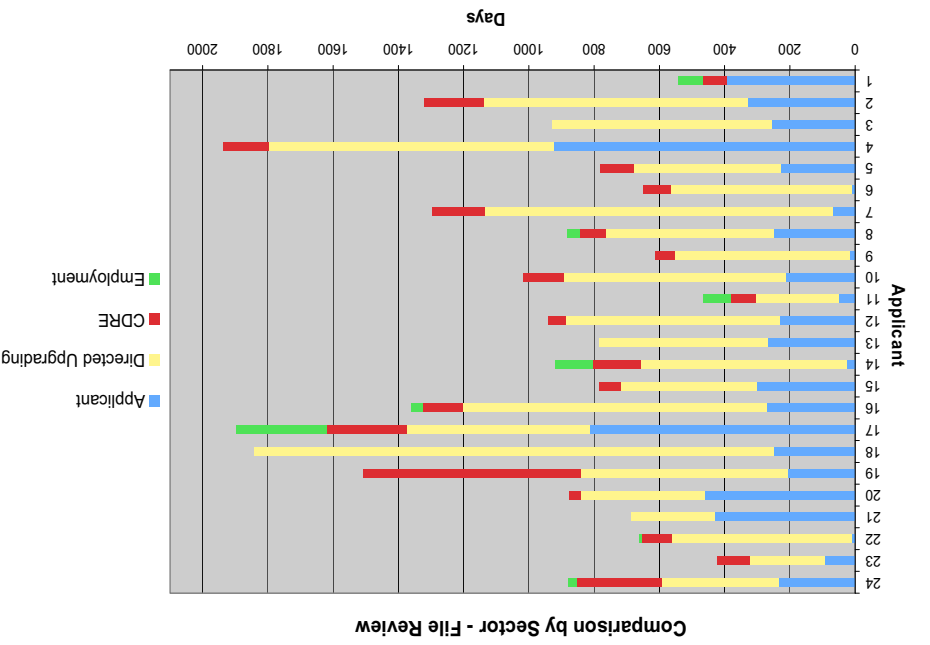


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- Give international applicants access to student loan & bursaries for upgrading study course (ongoing)
- Develop a Jurisprudence Handbook and self-access and expedite upgrading (ongoing)
- Add new on-line dietetics courses to increase activities
- Expand the resource list & learning

Future Directions



Presenters:
Lynn Cairns, CRNBC
Jean Farrar, CARNA

Competency Based Assessment for Internationally Educated Practitioners



- 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

Future Directions

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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 province or territory where intend to work
- All applicants write a national exam - Canadian Registered Nurse Examination (CRNE)

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Thank you!

Questions...

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- Three routes:
1. Graduate of an approved program undertaken in the Province: baccalaureate entry to practice; or
 2. RN in good standing in another Canadian jurisdiction; or
 3. Substantially equivalent competence (SEC)

Routes to Entry to Practice CARNA and CRNBC



- 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



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

College & Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA)



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

College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC)



Why Competency Based Assessment?

- Registered Nurses in BC and Alberta are now educated at Baccalaureate level
- Nursing education is focused on graduates meeting entry to practice competencies

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Why Competency Based Assessment? Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs):

- Come from a wide variety of education and health care systems with different expectations about the role of the RN
- Often have worked in other countries before looking to work in Canada

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Substantially Equivalent Competence (SEC)

- The applicant is assessed for evidence of substantial equivalence relative to established entry to practice competencies
- If gaps are found: require additional education to enable registration

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Why Competency Based Assessment?

- How do you measure if an applicant possesses the required competencies and is ready to practice safely and to the scope expected in our health care system?

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- ### 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



- ### The Roots of the SEC Assessment for IENs
- Mount Royal University Research Initiative:
- Three year project to create & evaluate a PLAR system for nursing (2003-2006)
 - Based on entry to practice competencies: the specific knowledge, skills, judgment & interpersonal attributes required of all graduates entering practice environment for the first time

- ### Why Competency Based Assessment?
- Provides:
- An alternative to exclusive reliance on paper documentation
 - An opportunity for IENs to demonstrate their current competencies - to "show what they know"



The Roots of the SEC Assessment for IENs

- Final project report validated the use of a variety of strategies to assess IENs ability to meet required competencies
- Development of the SEC assessment at Mount Royal University supported by Alberta government funding
- CARNA utilizing the SEC assessment since 2006

- ### Assessment of Eligibility for Registration
- Identification
 - English language proficiency
 - Competent Practice, Fitness to Practice, and Good Character
 - Education transcripts
 - Verification of current and past registrations held
 - Nursing experience including currency of practice



- ### The Next Chapter
- Capacity Building for IEN Assessment Project
 - Project timeline: Oct/07-Mar/10
 - British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nunavut (jurisdictions within the Western and Northern Health Human Resources Planning Forum):
 - Ministries of Health and Advanced Education
 - regulatory colleges
 - selected post-secondary nursing institutions
 - representatives from health authorities/regions



- ### When is the SEC Assessment Used?
- Not all IENs undergo the SEC assessment
 - Regulatory college determines when the SEC assessment will be required



- ### Assessment of Eligibility for Registration
- Begins with a paper based process
 - Review of completed application and other documents



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What is Involved?

- There is no charge to the applicant for an assessment
- IEN assessment centres are funded by government
- Applicant pays for travel and related expenses

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- ## 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

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What is Involved?

- 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

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-
- ## 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

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Competency Assessment Strategies

- Five (5) strategies to assess competencies:
 - Written Diagnostic Exams
 - Clinical Judgment Assessment
 - Triple Jump Assessment
 - Modified Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)
 - Candidate Self-Assessment

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What is Involved?

- 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 in a standardized format

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What is Involved?

- Competencies assessed reflect generalist education at the baccalaureate level
- 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

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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

- Triple Jump Assessment (interview)
 - From a brief client situation:
 - generate a problem list
 - identify and collect relevant data
 - revise the problem list based on the data
 - develop an intervention/management plan
 - self-evaluate
- Assesses knowledge, problem-solving, critical thinking, organizational, client assessment, self-evaluation, and self-directed learning abilities

Competency Assessment Strategies

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- 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
 - application of pharmacology and pathophysiology
 - response in rapidly changing patient situations

Competency Assessment Strategies

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

Competency Assessment Strategies

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- Clinical Judgment Assessment (interview)
- Evaluates ability to:
 - consider possibilities/ options; make sound clinical judgments in situations that are complex and have no "simple" answer
 - think deliberately and critically through a nursing situation
 - apply essential and relevant knowledge

Competency Assessment Strategies

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- 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
- The report is sent directly to the regulatory college

Competency Assessment Report

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

Self-assessment

Competency Assessment Strategies

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- Reviews the results of the SEC assessment
- Determines eligibility for registration based on all information (application, other documentation, SEC assessment report)
- Discusses the results of the SEC assessment with the applicant if requested

Regulatory college:

Eligibility Decision

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- Eligibility decision may be to:
- Approve eligibility to move forward with registration processes
 - Allows applicant to write the CRNE and get temporary/provisional registration (required to meet final employment reference requirement)
- OR

Eligibility Decision

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- Commitment to shared goals by both the IEN assessment centre and the regulatory college and to a collaborative and ongoing relationship

What Works

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- In most circumstances, completion of education is required before the applicant is eligible for registration

Education to Enable Registration

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- Targets competency gaps identified in the assessment process
- Utilizes existing educational institutions in the community
- May include 1 day workshops, standard theory courses and/ or clinical practice
- Length can range from 1 day to over a year depending on learning needs

Education to Enable Registration

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- Eligibility decision may be to:
Defer eligibility pending completion of education to address competency gaps
- OR
- Deny registration if extensive competency gaps indicate there is insufficient foundation on which to build

Eligibility Decision

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- 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

What Works

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- Objective, unbiased assessment of ability
- Maintenance of evidence-based assessment tools
- Respectful and fair interactions with applicants

What Works

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

What Works

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- 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 we have learned...

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What we have learned...

- Having an objective assessment of an individual's competencies is important and essential
- But...
- It is equally important and essential to have appropriate and accessible education interventions available to address any identified gaps

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

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

Challenges

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

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

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Thank you!

Questions...
