



Glossary of Terms

Accreditation: A process by which an educational program is evaluated and recognized as meeting certain predetermined standards of education. Important for ensuring the quality of nursing programs.

Adjustment of Status: A process that allows an eligible applicant to become a lawful permanent resident of the United States without having to go abroad and apply for an immigrant visa.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN): Nurses with advanced education and clinical training, often holding a master's or doctoral degree. APRNs have an expanded scope of practice, including roles such as nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, and clinical nurse specialists.

Agency: A healthcare staffing agency or recruitment firm that matches healthcare facilities with qualified nurses. Agencies help international nurses find job placements in the US.

All Chargeability Areas: Refers to countries that the Visa Bulletin does not list by name. People from these countries share the same visa application deadline, which is set for a large group rather than individually by country.

Authorization to Test (ATT): Authorization provided by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), allowing candidates to schedule and take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) exam.

Board of Nursing (BON): State-level regulatory body overseeing nursing practice and licensure within a specific state.

Clinical Experience: Hands-on practice and training in a healthcare setting that nursing students must complete as part of their educational requirements.

Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS): Organization providing services related to the evaluation of foreign nursing education and credentials, crucial in the licensure process for IENs in the US.

Compact State: States that are part of the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC), allowing nurses to practice in multiple states without obtaining additional licenses.

Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT): A method that uses computer technology and measurement to increase the efficiency and accuracy of the exam process.



Continuing Education (CE): Ongoing professional education for nurses and other healthcare professionals to maintain their licensing and stay updated on the latest in healthcare practices.

Credentials Evaluation: A determination, through review of transcripts and other relevant material, whether an education program is comparable to nursing education in the United States.

Credentials Evaluation Service (CES) Report: Provided by CGFNS, evaluates the educational credentials of internationally educated nurses against U.S. standards, necessary for nursing licensure.

Dependents: Spouses and children of nurses on an EB-3 visa who also receive permanent residency and work authorization in the United States.

Designated School Official (DSO): An official at a SEVP-certified school responsible for maintaining the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) records of F-1 students.

Domestic Test Center: Locations in the United States and Territories including American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands where candidates can seek U.S. licensure.

DS-260: Online immigrant visa application form required for processing at a US embassy or consulate abroad, essential for IENs applying for an EB-3 visa.

EB-2 Visa: Employment-based preference visa category for professionals holding advanced degrees or with exceptional ability.

EB-3 Visa: Employment-based third preference visa category for skilled workers, professionals, and other workers, including IENs.

Education Records Evaluation Service (ERES): Provides evaluations of international education credentials for individuals seeking to meet U.S. education requirements.

Educational Testing Service (ETS): The world's largest administrator of standardized tests and a leader in educational research.

ETA Form 9089: Application form for permanent employment certification issued by the United States Department of Labor (DOL).

E-Verify: A web-based system that allows enrolled employers to confirm the eligibility of their employees to work in the United States.

F-1 Student: A nonimmigrant visa status for international students attending an academic program or English Language Program at a U.S. college or university.



Falsified Identity Tracking System (FITS): Tool by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) for tracking individuals who fraudulently present themselves as nurses and/or fraudulent nursing programs.

Final Action Date: The date when the U.S. Department of State or USCIS can make a final decision on an applicant's Green Card application.

First Level Nurse: A registered nurse who has completed a three-year programme of education leading to a nursing qualification and an academic qualification (a degree or diploma).

Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR): The process of verifying that the education and job experience obtained in another country are equivalent to the standards established for Canadian or American workers.

Foreign-Educated Nurse (FEN): A nurse who provides and coordinates patient care after graduating from an approved program of at least two years in length outside the United States.

Form I-485: Form to apply for lawful permanent resident (LPR) status or adjust their status within the United States.

Form I-765: Form to apply for employment authorization. Used by F-1 students to request Optional Practical Training (OPT) or STEM OPT extension employment authorization from USCIS.

Foundation for International Services, Inc (FIS): Offers credential evaluation services for individuals pursuing education or employment in the United States.

H1-B Visa: Non-immigrant visa allowing U.S. employers to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations requiring theoretical or technical expertise.

Healthcare Immigration Transition (HIT): Refers to the process that international healthcare professionals undergo when transitioning to work in another country, including obtaining necessary visas, meeting licensure requirements, and adapting to new healthcare systems.

I-140: Form filed by U.S. employers with USCIS to petition for a foreign worker to become a lawful permanent resident (LPR) under the EB-3 category.

I-551: Document serving as proof of lawful permanent resident status in the US, also known as a Green Card.

Immigration Medical Examination (IME): A required health check performed by approved doctors for visa applicants to ensure they do not have any health conditions that could pose a public health risk.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS): English language proficiency test required for some IENs as part of the licensure process.



International Test Center: Locations outside the United States and Territories where candidates can seek U.S. licensure.

International Tax Identification Number (ITIN): A nine-digit number issued by the IRS to individuals required to file an income tax return but who are not eligible for a SSN. ITINs are for federal income tax purposes only and are not valid for employment purposes.

Josef Silny & Associates, Inc.: A firm that provides foreign credential evaluation and translation services.

L Visa: Non-immigrant visa for intracompany transferees with managerial roles or specialized knowledge, including in healthcare organizations.

Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR): Non-citizen authorized to live and work permanently in the United States.

Licensure by Endorsement: Allows a nurse who is already licensed in one jurisdiction to be granted a license in another jurisdiction without having to take an examination, based on their credentials and evidence of competence.

National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES): An association of independent credential evaluation agencies that adhere to a published set of ethical standards.

National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA): A membership organization for professionals involved in or associated with international education.

National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX): Standardized exam assessing the competency of nurses seeking licensure in the United States.

National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN): Organization responsible for developing and administering the NCLEX.

Next Generation: An enhanced NCLEX launched on April 1, 2023 to better measure nursing candidates' clinical judgment and decision making abilities through the use of innovative item types.

Nursing Regulatory Body (NRB): Jurisdictional governmental agencies in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories that are responsible for the regulation of nursing practice.

Optional Practical Training (OPT): A temporary employment permission allowing F-1 students to gain practical experience in their field of study in the U.S., either before (pre-completion) or after (post-completion) their academic studies.

Pearson VUE: Company administering computer-based licensure exams, including the NCLEX.



Permanent Labor Certification (PERM Certification): A certification by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) that a position cannot be filled by a U.S. worker.

Post-completion OPT: OPT authorized after the student completes their academic studies. Students must work at least 20 hours per week.

Pre-completion OPT: OPT authorized before the F-1 student's program end date. Students can work part-time (20 hours or less per week) while school is in session and full-time during school breaks.

Priority Date for Nurses: The date used by the Department of State to determine an applicant's place in the visa queue. The date a nurse's I-140 is received by USCIS becomes the "priority date" for issuance of an EB-3 visa to the nurse.

Re-entry Program: Educational programs designed to update and refresh the knowledge and skills of nurses who have been out of the workforce, ensuring they meet current standards before returning to practice.

Registered Nurse (RN): Licensed healthcare professional who has completed necessary education and passed the NCLEX.

Resident Alien Card: Older term for the Permanent Resident Card, proof of lawful permanent resident status in the United States.

Retrogression: A situation where the demand for Green Cards exceeds the supply in a particular category or country, causing the priority date to move backward, and delaying the application process.

Schedule A: Classification for occupations with recognized shortages of qualified U.S. workers, expediting the labor certification process for IENs.

Second-level or enrolled nurse: A nurse who provides basic nursing care under the direction of a first-level nurse. Regionally, they may be referred to as a practical nurse or a vocational nurse.

Social Security Number (SSN): Unique identification number issued by the U.S. government, often required for employment and official purposes.

Span Tran: Provides credential evaluation services for individuals pursuing education or employment in the United States.

Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP): A program of the National Security Investigations Division that acts as a bridge for government organizations that have an interest in information on nonimmigrants whose primary reason for coming to the United States is to be students.



Temporary Work Visa: A visa that allows individuals to work in a foreign country for a specific employer and for a limited period of time.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): English language proficiency test that some IENs may be required to take as part of the licensure process.

Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC): A standardized examination for language proficiency that has been developed by the Educational Testing Service.

TN Visa: Visa under NAFTA for Canadian and Mexican nurses, offering streamlined cross-border employment opportunities.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): Government agency overseeing lawful immigration to the United States, responsible for processing visa petitions and applications.

United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Federal department responsible for public security, roughly comparable to the interior or home ministries of other countries.

United States Department of Labor: Federal department involved in the labor certification process for foreign workers.

United States Department of State: Federal department leading the United States' foreign policy development. Includes the Bureau of Consular Affairs, which is responsible for the issuance of visas, including immigrant visas.

Visa Bulletin: A monthly publication by the U.S. Department of State that shows which Green Card applications can move forward, based on priority dates.

Visa Retrogression: Occurs when demand outpaces the available number of visas for the immigration category or country. The U.S. Department of State then creates a waiting list for visas. International nurses who want to apply must wait for their priority date to become current.

VisaScreen: Visa Credentials Assessment Service is a comprehensive screening service offered by CGFNS' division; the International Commission on Healthcare Professions (ICHP) available for healthcare professionals seeking an occupational visa to work in the United States.

Visa Lottery Caps: Annual numerical limits placed on certain visas, including the H-1B visa, with a selection process for eligible applicants.

World Education Service (WES): Provides credential evaluations for international students and immigrants planning to study or work in the United States.