



KENTUCKY BOARD OF NURSING
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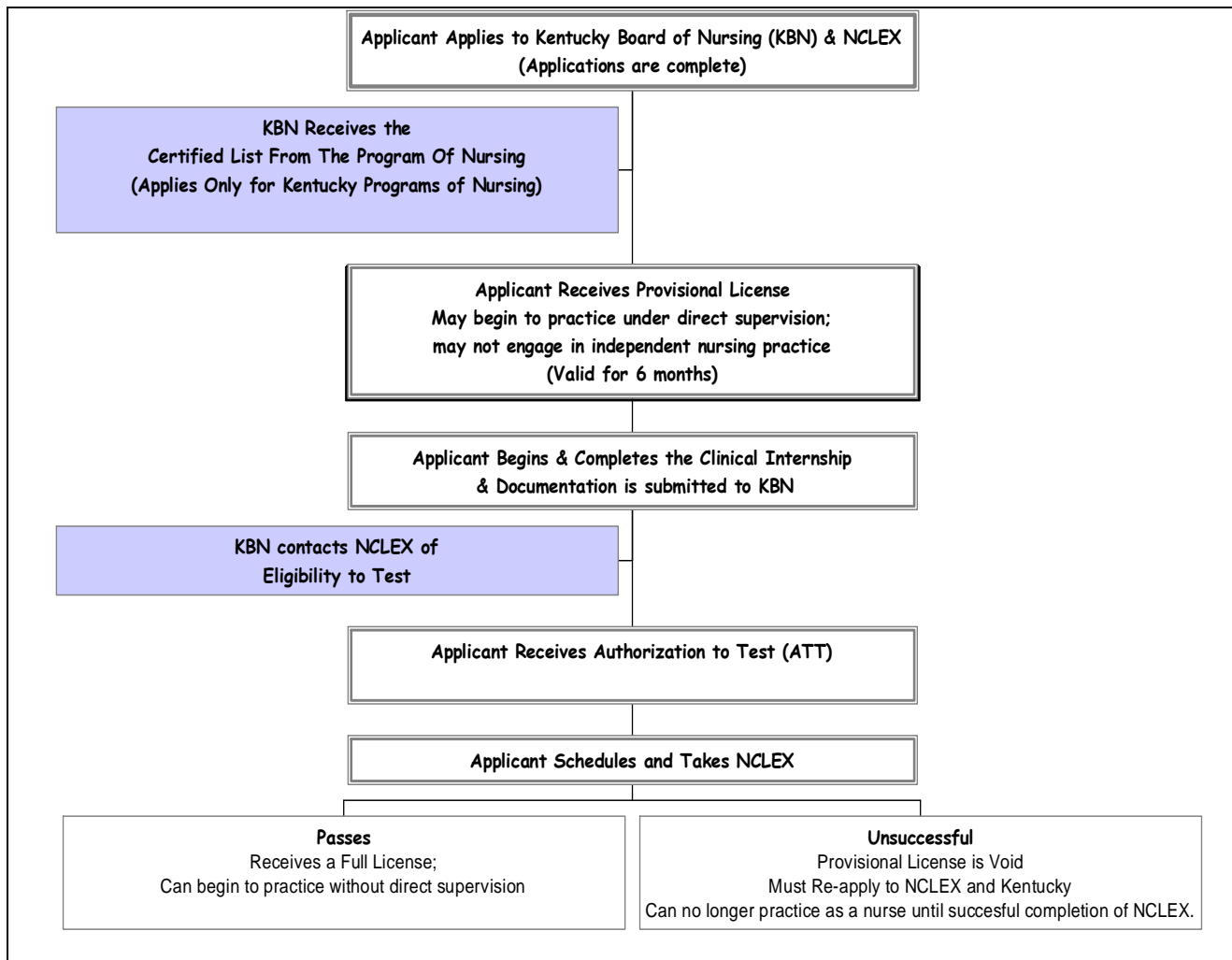
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Clinical Internship

During the legislative session in 2004, a new requirement was included in the Kentucky Statutes. Effective January 1, 2006, all new graduates seeking licensure within the state of Kentucky will be required to complete a clinical internship prior to full licensure in the state.

Process



GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the Clinical Internship?

The statute defines clinical internship as: "A supervised nursing practice experience, which involves any component of direct patient care." (KRS314.011 (20)) "The Clinical Internship shall last a minimum of 120 hours and shall be completed within six (6) months of the issuance of the provisional license". (KRS314.041 (4); 314.051 (5)) The key elements include: direct patient care, supervised by a licensed nurse, 120 hours, and 6 month time frame.

What does the Board consider to be "any component of direct patient care" (12/2005)

"Direct patient care" can be defined by the obvious components of "hands on" care but would include other activities related to patient care such as obtaining or giving report, charting, communicating with physicians, etc. Nurses can be involved in direct patient care without ever touching the patient. The Board has examined the concept of direct patient care and has expanded the interpretation of "any component of direct patient care" to include nursing practice experiences that influence and/or impact direct patient care. An example would be a nurse that works in a supervisory capacity. If you have a specific question about this interpretation, contact the Board Office. The Credentials Review Panel, a standing committee of the Board, is reviewing each situation and will make a determination. This committee meets on a monthly basis so advance notice needs to be given to ensure a determination prior to beginning the internship.

How does the Board define "supervised nursing practice"?

To qualify as "direct supervision", the nurse responsible for the applicant shall at all times be physically present in the facility and immediately available to the applicant while the applicant is engaged in the clinical internship. The nurse responsible for the applicant shall be currently licensed to practice as a nurse in Kentucky. (201 KAR 20:070, section 4 (a) & (10))

When is the effective date for the Clinical Internship Requirement?

Any persons applying for licensure by examination in Kentucky on or after January 1, 2006 will be required to show successful completion of the clinical internship prior to being made eligible to take NCLEX.

When can a new graduate begin the clinical internship?

A new graduate must first make application for licensure to the state of Kentucky. Once all program requirements are met for graduation, the Kentucky nursing program sends a certified list of graduates to the Credentialing Branch of the Board. Assuming that the individual's application for licensure is complete and their name is listed on the program's certified list*, the new graduate will be issued a provisional license. *Applicants educated out of state must submit a final transcript

Can more than one nurse serve in the role of "supervising nurse" for a new graduate?

It is up to the facility conducting the internship to establish the schedule for the new graduate based on availability of resources. If more than one nurse will serve in this role, it is advised that the facility identify a nurse that will be responsible for verifying that the internship was completed.

Are there any restrictions where the Clinical Internship can be completed? Does it have to solely occur in the intended practice area?

The internship can be completed in any clinical setting where direct patient care is provided and there is a licensed nurse available to provide direct supervision. Though not mandated, it stands to reason that the preferred setting for the internship would be the clinical area where the new nurse will work once full license is granted. Since the purpose of the internship is to allow the new graduate an opportunity to work with a licensed nurse, it is desirable, but not required, to be within in the clinical area where they will continue to work.

Does the applicant have to be employed by the site where the internship is conducted?

Employment is not a requirement for the completion of the internship. The only stipulation is that the 120 hours is completed post graduation and following receipt of the provisional license. More than likely the internship will occur where the new graduate is employed but this is not a requirement.

Do all 120 hours need to be completed at the same clinical agency?

The regulation does not specifically state that all 120 hours need to be completed at the same institution. It is preferable that this occurs at one facility to allow the new graduate a continuous application of learning. When submitting Internship verification to the Board, care must be given to list complete information for each site where clinical hours were obtained.

Who is responsible for submitting the verification of the internship to the Board?

Since the license belongs to the nurse applicant, it is the applicant's ultimate responsibility to send in or make certain that the documentation has been sent to the Board indicating that the internship has been completed.

How does this regulation impact nurses endorsing into Kentucky from other states?

If a graduate chooses to seek licensure first in another state, assuming that they meet all other licensure requirements, the applicant will be required to provide documentation that they have completed a minimum of 120 hours of practice as a nurse. For those that have not completed the 120 hours required for the internship, they will be issued a provisional license. Once documentation of completion of the internship of 120 hours is validated, the individual will be granted a full license.

How does the practice of the nurse applicant change once the internship is completed?

The nurse applicant continues to practice on a provisional license, so there is essentially no change in the requirements for the practice. Under the *Ky Nursing Laws*, as long as the nurse is an R.N.A. or L.P.N.A., the individual shall only work under direct supervision and shall not engage in independent nursing practice. (KRS314.041 (5) and KRS314.051 (6)). The applicant's assignment may increase or change, but the requirement for direct supervision does not change, nor can the applicant practice independently. The degree of direct supervision may change, in that the amount of shoulder to shoulder supervision may be less, but the requirement for supervised nursing practice does not change.

Is there a form available on the KBN website that can be utilized to document internship completion?

A form is available for use by the applicant for submitting the information but it is not MANDATORY. As long as the required information is submitted, it will be accepted in any format. Documentation of completion of the clinical internship must include the following information:

- Name, address, telephone number, social security number and date of birth of the applicant;
- Provisional license number;
- Name, address and telephone number of the facility where the clinical internship was completed; and
- Name of the supervising nurse.

If sent electronically, it can be faxed to:

502- 696-3953

If sent by mail:

Kentucky Board of Nursing; Attn: Credentials Branch
312 Whittington Parkway, Suite 300, Louisville, KY 40222

Provisional License

When can a new graduate expect to receive the provisional license?

Once all the required materials are at the Board, provisional licenses will be processed and mailed within seven to fourteen business days. Verification of the license is also available through the KBN website (www.kbn.ky.gov)

How long is the provisional license valid?

The provisional license will be valid for six months from the date of issuance.

Can the internship be started prior to the issuance of the provisional license?

No. In order to be eligible for a clinical internship, the applicant must hold a provisional license. The applicant can begin the internship as soon as it is verified that they have an active provisional license. Applicants will receive the provisional license via US Mail.

What role does the ATT (Authorization To Test) have in the internship process?

Effective January 1, 2006, the ATT will no longer play a role in the licensure process. A new graduate begins the internship because of the provisional license, not the ATT. As is the current practice, new graduates that are unsuccessful on NCLEX are not eligible to work as a nurse until the test is successfully completed.

INTERNSHIP SPECIFICS

What if something happens and the applicant is not able to complete the internship within the six-month period of time designated for the provisional license?

If an applicant should experience a temporary physical or mental inability and is unable to complete the clinical internship, the applicant, prior to the expiration of the provisional license, must contact the Board and submit a petition to "Hold Provisional License in Abeyance". In order for the Board to rule on this, the applicant is required to submit evidence from a licensed health care practitioner that documents a diagnosis of a temporary physical or mental inability that prevented the applicant from completing the internship within the original six (6) months.

Once the "Petition to Hold Provisional License in Abeyance" is granted, the current provisional license is voided and must be immediately returned to the Board. Once the temporary physical or mental condition has been resolved, the person can request the board to reissue the provisional license. Until the time that a second provisional license is issued, the person may not engage in nursing practice, this includes any time devoted to orientation.

Can an applicant request a second provisional license for a reason other than for physical or mental inability to complete the internship?

No. It is critical that a nurse applicant not submit his/her application for licensure in Kentucky until they believe that they will be able to complete the internship and take the NCLEX examination within the six-month period of time that the provisional license is active.

Does any portion of classroom orientation count toward the 120 hour requirement i.e. time in a simulation lab?

No, the regulation specifically calls for "supervised nursing practice experience, which involves any component of direct patient care." Time spent in the classroom for general facility or nursing orientation is not considered to be direct patient care. Time spent in a simulation lab would also not meet this definition.

Does the internship have to be 1:1 (supervising nurse to new grad)?

Many facilities already utilize a preceptor model for a one-to-one experience when new graduates arrive on the unit. The one change is now the law mandates the time period to consist of a minimum of 120 hours. The regulation does not specify that the relationship must be 1:1.

When determining the model chosen for the internship, a definition that needs to be kept in mind is that of "direct supervision". To qualify, as "direct supervision" the nurse responsible for the applicant shall at all times be physically present in the facility and immediately available to the applicant while the applicant is engaged in the clinical internship. The intent of the internship is to ensure that new nurses have an established period of time with an experienced nurse as they begin to learn their new role of licensed nurse.

Does it make a difference what level of "license nurse" supervises the new graduate?

According to the statute 314.041 and 314.051 an R.N.A. shall work under the direct supervision of a registered nurse; while an L.P.N.A. shall only work under the direct supervision of a nurse.

How do applicants sign charting during this provisional license period?

New applicants should sign their name followed by the initials RNA (Registered Nurse Applicant) or LPNA (Licensed Practical Nurse Applicant) until full licensure status is achieved.

What is the difference between the 120-hour Integrated Practicum completed pre-graduation and the 120-hour Clinical Internship completed post graduation? Can the 120 hour pre-graduation count for the Clinical Internship requirement?

Each pre-licensure program of nursing within the state is required to include an integrated practicum for those students entering the program as of July 1, 2004. The integrated practicum consists of a minimum of 120 clock hours of concentrated clinical experience of direct patient care in a health care facility or health care organization. This practicum must be completed within a period not to exceed seven (7) consecutive weeks during the last semester or quarter of a nursing program. This practicum is specific to the program of nursing and allows the faculty to design the clinical experience to fulfill their program outcomes.

While the Integrated Practicum is a part of program completion requirements, the clinical internship is required for initial licensure. The focus of the internship is to begin to integrate the new graduate into the role of a licensed nurse. Completion of the internship will more than likely be within the setting and specialty where the new nurse will begin his/her practice. Since the intent of the two clinical experiences is different, the clinical time periods are not interchangeable.

Can the internship hours be a part of the nursing orientation program or does it have to be separate?

Internship hours can be contained within the overall facility orientation program as long as the hours meet the other requirements, i.e. total number of hours, direct patient care, and supervision by a licensed nurse.

What happens if the applicant is unsuccessful on NCLEX?

If the applicant should be unsuccessful on NCLEX, the provisional license is voided and shall be immediately returned to the Board. Since the person no longer holds a provisional license, they can no longer work in the capacity of a nurse applicant. The applicant would have to re-apply to the Board for a license and follow the re-testing process. Persons are eligible to re-test no sooner than 45 days.

Will the internship be required to be repeated at any point should the LPNA or RNA be unsuccessful with achieving licensure?

Once the internship has been completed and verified, the applicant will not be required to repeat this process for licensure purposes. The only time that another internship will be required is if the nurse moves to a different level of licensure, i.e. an LPN who returns to school to become an RN or an RN graduate that seeks licensure as an LPN. In both incidents, the nurse would be required to complete an internship for the new corresponding level of practice.

What is the role of the supervising nurse during the clinical internship period?

The RN/LPN assigned for the clinical internship period is responsible to provide the appropriate oversight based on the level of educational preparation of the new graduate. In a supervising capacity, the registered nurse should provide direction and assistance to those supervised, observe and monitor the activities of those supervised, and evaluate the effectiveness of acts performed under supervision.

Is the supervisor responsible for the actions of the applicant?

A nurse applicant is held individually responsible and accountable for his/her actions and decisions, and is required to practice with reasonable skill and safety.. The supervising nurse is accountable and responsible for providing supervision. Supervision has been defined by the Board to mean the provision of guidance by a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse for the accomplishment of nursing care with periodic observation and evaluation of the performance of the care including validation that the nursing care has been performed in a safe manner

By signing the verification form, to what is the supervising nurse attesting?

When signing the verification sheet, the supervising nurse is simply reporting that the applicant has completed the 120 hours of direct patient care. The signature in no way indicates the level of competency of the applicant. Nurses signing a verification form should be certain to list the number of hours that they supervised the applicant, i.e. the full 120 hours or what portion of these.

Does the internship requirement apply ONLY to new graduates?

Does this meant that a licensed nurse, perhaps one who has been away from the bedside for a while, would have to go through the 120 hours as well. The law only refers to new graduates seeking licensure. Nurses wishing to re-enter the profession would need to follow the regulations related to reinstatement of a nursing license.

How this regulation impact foreign educated nurses applying for licensure within Kentucky?

When discussing foreign nurses that are entering Kentucky by examination, there are two considerations: have they been working in the U.S. or will Kentucky be their first practice area in the U.S. For those nurses new to the U.S., they will be required to complete the internship. For those nurses who have been working as a nurse elsewhere in the US but have not taken NCLEX, as long as they can provide evidence of employment for at least 120 hours as a nurse, they will not have to complete the internship.

Additional questions, contact:

Patricia Spurr, Education Consultant 502-429-3333 patricia.spurr@ky.gov

References: KRS 314.011; 051; 041; 201 KAR 20:070. Licensure by examination.

August 4, 2005; Revised October 5, 2005; October 24, 2005; March 2, 2007