



# ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

**Continuing and Distance Education**

**Internationally Educated Nurses: Distance Education Program**

**CAUSE Program Nomination (Over 48 Instructional Hours)**

**March 2, 2022**

**Submitted by: StFX Department of Continuing and Distance Education**

## ABSTRACT

St. Francis Xavier University is a leader in the preparation and ongoing professional development of Nurses across Nova Scotia. Through the department of Continuing and Distance Education, our StFX Nursing programs provide access to training for nurses across the county. In total over **3800 nurses participate in distance nursing programs through StFX.**

In 2019, responding to the need to qualify Internationally Trained Nurses for work in Canada, the Continuing and Distance Education team began the arduous process of deploying coursework to specifically address competency gaps as outlined by the Ontario College of Nurses. In total 9 online courses were created to help qualify candidates to complete their licensing exams and achieve placements in Ontario.

By March 2022, **2130, internationally trained nurses have participated** in programming through StFX to support their employment in the Canadian Healthcare system. Ontario has recently created a consortium that continues to build system capacity by qualifying internationally educated nurses for employment. StFX prides itself in the work it has done to identify this need and will continue to play a vital role in expanding capacity for the healthcare system in Nova Scotia and across Canada.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The StFX Distance Nursing Program provides International Educated Nurses (IENs) the opportunity to complete baccalaureate level nursing courses that develop and cultivate nursing knowledge, skill, and judgement related to an individual's identified competency gaps, provided by a Provincial/Territorial College of Nurses within Canada. These courses are offered on a part-time basis through distance education.

The StFX Distance Nursing Program Manager reviews and assesses each candidate's RN competency gap list and provides course recommendations based on an applicant's portfolio, using the framework established by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO), [CNO IEN Competencies](#).

Competencies are the building blocks of nursing practice. They are the behavioural actions that require a nurse to bring their depth of knowledge, skill, and judgment to their role, allowing them to safely practice and adapt to changes in a health-care environment. If an assessment identifies competency gaps, the applicant may be required to either go through additional assessment or to complete further education so that those gaps are addressed.

Nursing education and standards of nursing competence differ from one country to the next. Even if the applicant's nursing program was recognized as one that allowed him/her to practice as an RN in their home country, there is no guarantee that it will meet CNO's nursing education requirement. Because of this, most RN applicants who completed a nursing program in another country must undergo additional assessment before they can write the registration exam.

This assessment considers the candidate's initial nursing program, additional nursing education they may have completed, and any nursing practice experience they may have. Applicants who

can provide evidence of nursing practice are also assessed by an independent body that reports its findings back to the College.

The StFX distance nursing program for Internationally Trained nurses is not simply a list of courses, it is a full-scale effort of the part of the university to consult with candidates of various backgrounds, to accelerate their participation into the Canadian Healthcare system.

### **Value / Service**

The StFX Distance Nursing Program provides IENs with the educational upgrading they require to obtain their RN license to practice in Ontario. Program Office staff process IEN non-degree applications from start to finish informing students of the courses recommended to fill their competency gaps after their CNO assessment has been reviewed by the Program Manager; registering IEN students in the courses they request, based on their recommended list of courses; and preparing Verification of Course Completion (VCC) forms required by CNO that identify the competencies filled by each course.

Several StFX IEN students have completed the non-degree courses needed to fill their competency gaps (usually between 1 and 7 courses, or 3 to 24 credits), enabling them to obtain their RN license, and then apply to continue in the Post-RN BScN Program to receive their BScN degree.

### **Complexity**

The Distance Nursing courses, initially part of the current Post-RN BScN Program, have been configured to fulfill competency gap requirements as outlined by CNO. The Distance Nursing Program Manager must maintain a good working relationship with CNO to be able to properly determine which of our courses will enable each IEN student to meet their competency gaps. As CNO updates their required RN competencies, these changes need to be shared with the Distance Nursing Program Manager so our courses can be revised when necessary.

The ability of the Nursing Staff within the Continuing and Distance Education Unit, to manage multiple relationships within the regulatory environment across multiple jurisdictions adds considerable complexity to program.

### **Ingenuity and Innovation**

Prior to 2019 this program did not exist at StFX, IEN's were forced to navigate to BSN coursework that may not be relevant to their specific competency gap. The opportunity was identified in the Continuing and Distance Education unit; the crosswalk required to map the competencies required and the articulation process developed to serve candidate across the world was both bold and creative. Perhaps, most significantly this program was created just before the global pandemic and it is not a stretch to say that the increased capacity this program facilitated at a critical time for Canada, saved lives. It was both forward thinking and responsive – and as a testament to its ingenuity it has recently prompted the creation of similar programs across the country to respond to our current crisis.

## **Innovation in Delivery**

All courses in the Distance Nursing Program are offered online through Moodle and are asynchronous (anytime, anywhere). Although there is a well-structured and demanding workflow for each course, IEN students can integrate the flexible class time into their current work and family life.

Exams for the program courses are offered online and can be written within a 3-day window – giving the students flexibility to write their exam at a convenient time for their work and family schedules. These exams require a proctor arranged through ProctorU, an online proctoring service with which Continuing & Distance Education (CDE) has an agreement. For a reasonable charge, ProctorU provides the student with the convenience of writing their exams within any room where they can be alone and undisturbed, if the room has reliable, uninterrupted internet with adequate speed.

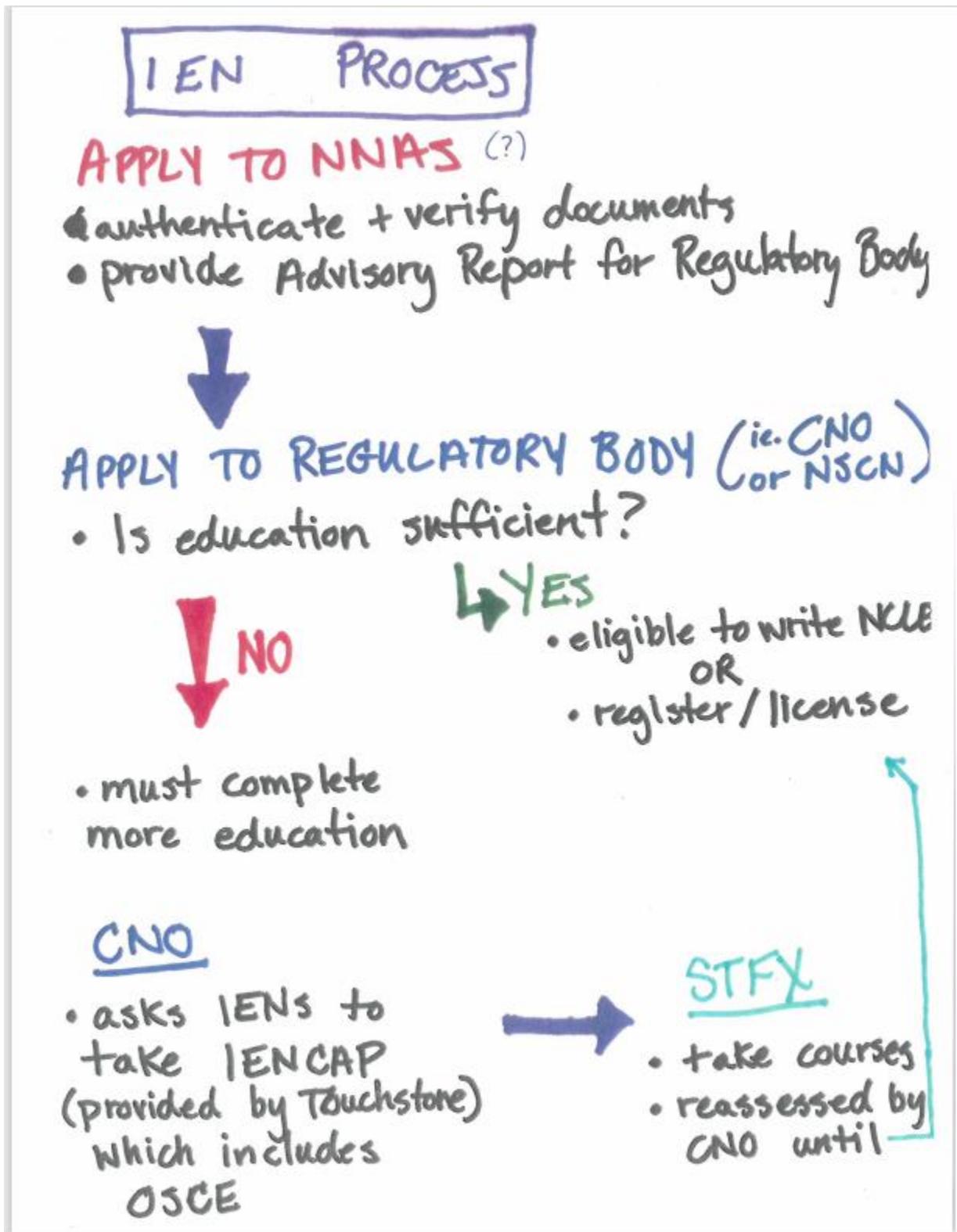
The course content is organized in Moodle by CDE Support, the department's online instructional technology support group. During Covid-19 shutdowns, CDE Support was called on to help StFX's IT Services (instructional technology services) with the huge task of bringing most of the university's in-person courses online.

## **Profile of Continuing Education**

Like most continuing education units, CDE at StFX has long existed at the margins of the University Community, however the global pandemic has shone a light on the core competencies of CDE. These competencies in online learning and student-centered design for non-traditional learners, led to the creation of the Internationally Educated Nursing Program at StFX. It is a true success story and has catapulted the CDE unit to an increased profile not only at the University but across the Nova Scotia Healthcare system, where our ability to provide training at scale will be a key determinant of the success of several NSHA initiatives in the future.

## Promotional Information

### A Quick Guide for Internationally Educated Nurses



Website: Available at <https://www.mystfx.ca/continuingeducation/online-nursing-programs/internationally-educated-nurses-ien>



CONTINUING AND  
DISTANCE EDUCATION

St. Francis Xavier University



INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED NURSES (IEN)

DEPARTMENT MENU ▾

## INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED NURSES (IEN)

The StFX Distance Nursing Program provides International Educated Nurses (IEN) the opportunity to complete baccalaureate level nursing courses that develop and cultivate nursing knowledge, skill, and judgement related to an individual's identified competency gaps, provided by a Provincial/Territorial College of Nurses within Canada.

The StFX Distance Nursing Program Manager will review and assess each candidate's RN competency gap list and provide course recommendations based on an individual's competency gaps.

**\*\*Please note, the Distance Nursing programs are not eligible for any government student loan funding.**

There are 2 steps in the Application Process:

1. Click on "APPLY NOW" (green button at the top right of this page).
  - o You will receive an email the next business confirming that you applied. This email will include your StFX Student Number which you will need for step 2.
2. Click [here](#) to go to the Admission Requirements screen, scroll down to "Continuing and Distance Education - Nursing (Internationally Educated Nurses)" and you will find the "Supplemental Application form" & the "IEN Reference form".

[CNO Internationally Educated Nurses Competency Assessment Program](#)



**ST. FRANCIS XAVIER**  
UNIVERSITY

**NON-DEGREE POST-RN  
DISTANCE NURSING  
PROGRAM**

**FAQs:**

**Frequently Asked Questions for Students  
Satisfying CNO Requirements**

**StFX University reserves the right to alter policies, procedures, fees, course availability, delivery mode, schedules and/or academic program requirements at any time. It is the responsibility of the student to become and stay informed on the academic regulations and requirements of the specific program of study.**

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**Q: HOW DO I CONTACT DISTANCE NURSING?****Distance Nursing Program Office**

The Program Office is the centre of organizational activity for all Distance Nursing Programs. It is here that all details of a student's academic program are coordinated. Along with a multitude of other program activities, staff organize and arrange all ProctorU Exam settings, regulate 'office hours' to facilitate student contact with professors, and offer support and guidance to students. Staff at the Distance Nursing Program Office are readily available to assist students at any point in their academic journey.

**Mailing Address:**

Distance Nursing Program Office  
Continuing & Distance Education Department  
St. Francis Xavier University  
PO Box 5000  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 2W5  
Canada

**Contact Information:**

Tel: 1-800-565-4371 or 902-867-5190

Fax: 1-902-867-5154

Email: [Distance.Nursing@stfx.ca](mailto:Distance.Nursing@stfx.ca)

Website: <http://www2.mystfx.ca/continuingeducation/post-m-bscn-distance-nursing>

**Office Hours and Location:**

8:30am - 4:30pm, Monday to Friday

MacDonald Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
2175 Varsity Drive  
St. Francis Xavier University  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia

**Program Staff:**

Fred Allen, Program Coordinator, Room 211  
Marie Kopf, Program Assistant, Room 202  
Debbie Coughlin, Program Assistant, Room 201

**Q: HOW DO I ACCESS MY STFX EMAIL, MyDATA & BANNER Self Service?**

Once you receive your Welcome Package from the Program Office, you must set up your StFX Email Account as soon as possible. Your StFX student email account is used for all communication between you and StFX. It is vital that you check and maintain your account regularly.

**Your PERSONAL LOGIN INFORMATION can be found on your Acceptance Letter.**

EXAMPLE ONLY →

**DO NOT USE  
THESE NUMBERS!!**

StFX ID number:	201601234
PIN:	123456
StFX Username:	x2016abc
Original WebFX Password:	abc1d4567e
<i>Keep these in a secure place.</i>	

Use StFX Username  
and Password for  
access to MyData,  
Email and  
**portal.stfx.ca**

**Activating your StFX email account:**

1. Go to the MyStFX homepage  
<http://sites.stfx.ca/welcome/>
2. Select the **Office 365** link and enter your **StFX Username, be sure to include @stfx.ca** (example: x2015abc@stfx.ca) and your applicable password as outlined on your acceptance letter.

**Changing or Recovering your Password:**

1. Go to the IT Services homepage  
(<http://www2.mystfx.ca/itservices/>)
2. Click on Password Reset and follow instructions.

If you are unable to access your StFX email account, please contact the Information Technology Services at [itservices@stfx.ca](mailto:itservices@stfx.ca) or phone (902) 867-2356 or toll free at 1-888-860-2356.

**Q: WHERE CAN I GET HELP FOR ACADEMIC WRITING?**

All StFX students are expected to maintain the highest academic integrity. It is important to be aware of the **penalties for plagiarism** and the use of unauthorized aids in assignments or examinations as outlined by the Registrar's Office:

<http://www2.mystfx.ca/registrar-office/academic-integrity>

The APA (American Psychological Association) 7th edition format is required in all written academic papers in Nursing and the social sciences. If you need help with APA formatting, contact the StFX Student Success Centre for support:

<http://www2.mystfx.ca/student-success/>

**Q: WHERE DO I FIND MORE PROGRAM INFORMATION?****XCHANGE Newsletter**

The newsletter is produced by the Program Office. The electronic version will be e-mailed to your StFX Web Mail account and can be found on the Distance Nursing web site

<http://www2.mystfx.ca/continuingeducation/xchange-newsletters>.

**Library Resources**

<http://stfx.libguides.com/c.php?g=715240&p=5099523>

**Course Instructor**

Although online course materials provide clear learning objectives and expository material, there may be occasions when students have trouble understanding a particular lesson and wish to clarify course expectations or discuss assignments.

Instructors appreciate student response. It is possible that your inquiry may help other students, especially if the professor feels that a particular clarification should be communicated through a course bulletin. Also, resolve questions and concerns as early as possible; waiting until the day before an exam or an assignment deadline to seek assistance may be disastrous!

Ensure the answer to your question is not already included within the course materials (ie: syllabus, etc). This is a basic courtesy to the instructors and to other students who need the instructor's time.

**General Inquiries**

If you have **any** questions or concerns regarding your studies, please **only** email the Program Office your inquiries, at [distance.nursing@stfx.ca](mailto:distance.nursing@stfx.ca).

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