

Guide to  
obtaining a **Permit**

from the **Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec**  
for nurses from outside Canada



Ordre  
des infirmières  
et infirmiers  
du Québec

## Text

**Line Lacroix**

*Director*

Registrar's Office

## Collaboration

**Judith Leprohon**

*Director*

Scientific Division

**Carmelle Marchessault**

*Director*

Legal Services Division

## Translation

**Terry Knowles**

### Legal deposit

Library and Archives Canada, 2011

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2011

ISBN 978-2-89229-550-4 (PDF)

© Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec, 2011

All rights reserved

**N.B.** In keeping with OIIQ editorial policy, the feminine gender is used merely to simplify the text and designates both men and women.

### IMPORTANT

This publication does not replace the applicable legal texts and does not claim to be exhaustive. We recommend that you read the original version of the legislation governing the practice of nursing in Quebec. The OIIQ will not be held responsible for any discrepancy between this publication and the acts and regulations in effect. The official version of the acts and regulations may be consulted on our website, [www.oiiq.org](http://www.oiiq.org).

**LA VERSION FRANÇAISE DE CE DOCUMENT EST DISPONIBLE SUR LE SITE WEB À L'ADRESSE SUIVANTE:**

**[http://www.oiiq.org/Admission à la profession/Infirmière formée hors Québec/Équivalences](http://www.oiiq.org/Admission%20à%20la%20profession/Infirmière%20formée%20hors%20Québec/Équivalences)**

---

This guide gives an overview of the professional system in Quebec, describes nurses' professional practice as it is defined in the *Nurses Act* and explains the steps to be followed by anyone wishing to practise nursing in Quebec.<sup>1</sup>

## The professional system

All professionals in Quebec are governed by professional orders. The professional system has 330,000 members in 46 orders, 26 of them in the healthcare field. The main purpose of all these professional orders is to protect the public, ensuring that Quebeckers have high-quality, safe services delivered with competence and integrity by their members.

The functions of a professional order include issuing permits to practise the profession, setting conditions for access to the profession, such as the admission examination, and taking steps to monitor the practice of the profession by its members. The orders are not unions, which negotiate working conditions, or educational institutions, which are governed by the Department of Education, Recreation and Sport, known in French as MELS.

**The Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec (OIIQ)** is the largest professional order in Quebec, with nearly 72,000 members. **Anyone wishing to work as a nurse in Quebec must be a member of the OIIQ.**

## The nursing profession in Quebec

There are many different job possibilities for nurses in Quebec. They work in all parts of the province, in hospitals, local community service centres (CLSCs), residential and long-term care centres, medical clinics and health centres. They can also work as educators or in research or management.

In Quebec, clinical nursing practice is governed by legislation that clearly acknowledges nurses' expertise and decision-making authority in health care. They are not limited to a list of specific acts. Rather, they have a field of practice, which includes activities reserved to nurses or shared with other health professionals. The excerpt from the *Nurses Act* on the next page defines nurses' field of practice and the activities reserved to them.

Nurses in Quebec also provide clinical leadership, in particular by determining and adjusting the therapeutic nursing plan, as part of clinical monitoring of clients, when co-ordinating the nursing team or in co-operation with other professionals.

1. *Regulation respecting the standards for a diploma equivalence or training equivalence for the issue of a permit by the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec*, available at: [www.oiiq.org/L'Ordre/Qui\\_sommes-nous?/Lois\\_et\\_règlements](http://www.oiiq.org/L'Ordre/Qui_sommes-nous?/Lois_et_règlements)

## NURSES' FIELD OF PRACTICE

Every profession is defined by a field of practice that describes it in general terms, outlining the nature and purpose of its practice and its main activities.

Section 36 of the *Nurses Act* defines the field of practice of the profession and the 14 professional activities reserved to nurses, as follows:

“The practice of nursing consists in assessing a person's state of health, determining and carrying out the nursing care and treatment plan, providing nursing and medical care and treatment in order to maintain or restore health and prevent illness, and providing palliative care.” (*Nurses Act*, section 36, paragraph 1).

### The 14 reserved activities

(*Nurses Act*, section 36, paragraph 2)

- assessing the physical and mental condition of a symptomatic person;
- providing clinical monitoring of the condition of persons whose state of health is problematic, including monitoring and adjusting the therapeutic nursing plan;
- initiating diagnostic and therapeutic measures, according to a prescription;
- initiating diagnostic measures for the purposes of a screening operation under the *Public Health Act*;
- performing invasive examinations and diagnostic tests, according to a prescription;
- providing and adjusting medical treatment, according to a prescription;
- determining the treatment plan for wounds and alterations of the skin and teguments and providing the required care and treatment;
- applying invasive techniques;
- participating in pregnancy care, deliveries and post-partum care;
- providing nursing follow-up for persons with complex health problems;
- administering and adjusting prescribed medications or other prescribed substances;
- performing vaccinations as part of a vaccination operation under the *Public Health Act*;
- mixing substances to complete the preparation of a medication, according to a prescription;
- making decisions as to the use of restraint measures.

## MAIN STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED TO OBTAIN YOUR RIGHT TO PRACTISE

At the same time as you contact the OIIQ<sup>2</sup> to obtain the right to practise nursing in Quebec, you must also contact the Canadian and Quebec governments to begin immigration procedures and obtain the **required authorizations, such as a work permit**<sup>3</sup>.

If you are already legally authorized to practise nursing in Canada, the *Règlement sur les autorisations légales d'exercer la profession d'infirmière ou d'infirmier hors du Québec qui donnent ouverture au permis de l'Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec* applies, and you do not need to apply for equivalence. Otherwise, please contact the Registrar's Office for details on the steps you will need to take. Contact us at: [www.oiiq.org](http://www.oiiq.org); e-mail [bureau-registraire@oiiq.org](mailto:bureau-registraire@oiiq.org); telephone 514 935-2505, ext. 680.

### 1. Prepare your application for recognition of equivalence

Complete the forms in your equivalence recognition application kit, attach the required documents and pay the applicable fees for opening a file. For more information, consult the instructions attached to the forms.

### 2. Obtain recognition of equivalence

The **Admission by Equivalence Committee** is the OIIQ body that studies all applications for recognition of equivalence. Whenever we receive an application for equivalence from a nurse trained outside Quebec, we compare her training program with the degrees and training offered in Quebec<sup>4</sup>. The **Admission by Equivalence Committee** also takes account of any additional training and professional experience and makes an individual decision for each application.

The **Admission by Equivalence Committee** may require that graduates trained outside Quebec take **additional training** in certain fields, for instance in caring for adults

or seniors with reduced autonomy or in mental health, if their training is not deemed equivalent to that given in Quebec. These courses are offered in Quebec and, under certain conditions, may also be taken in the nurse's country of origin.

### 3. Complete a professional integration program

To ensure proper professional adaptation, the **Admission by Equivalence Committee requires all nurses trained outside Quebec to complete a professional integration program in the Quebec context of practice**.

The purposes of the program are to:

- familiarize them with the Quebec context of practice, in professional, legal, ethical, organizational and socio-cultural terms;
- help them adapt their existing skills to enable them to practise nursing in Quebec;
- demonstrate the clinical skills they need to practise safely and efficiently in a Quebec setting.

The length of the program is set by the **Admission by Equivalence Committee** and varies from a few weeks to a few months, depending on the individual nurse's profile.

Before beginning the professional integration program, you **must** obtain a **registration certificate**. The OIIQ will send you the registration application form at the proper time.

2. For more information: [www.oiiq.org](http://www.oiiq.org); e-mail [bureau-registraire@oiiq.org](mailto:bureau-registraire@oiiq.org); telephone: 514 935-2505 ext. 680.

3. For more information, consult [www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca).

4. For more information, see the box entitled "Basic training for Quebec nurses," p. 7.

#### 4. Obtain the status of Candidate for the Profession of Nursing (CPN)

Once you have received recognition of equivalence, you can practise as a CPN. This temporary status gives you the privilege of practising some activities reserved to nurses.

CPNs are governed by specific conditions: they must practise under the supervision of a nurse with the appropriate experience and who is present in the care unit concerned. CPN status allows you to hold paid employment. For more details on CPNs' activities and working conditions, see the box entitled "**Candidate for the profession of nursing (CPN)**" on page 12.

Before you begin practising as a CPN, you **must** have an *Attestation of practice as a candidate for the profession of nursing*. The OIIQ will send you the "Application for attestation of practice as a candidate for the profession of nursing and mandatory declaration" form at the appropriate time. Note that the registration certificate does not allow you to practise as a CPN.

#### 5. Pass the professional examination

The Order's professional examination is mandatory for all candidates. Its purpose is to ensure that they possess the necessary knowledge, skills and judgment to handle clinical situations similar to those encountered in nursing practice in Quebec.

The OIIQ holds **two examination sessions per year**, in the fall and winter. You must sit the examination whenever you are notified of the examination. Any unjustified failure to sit the examination is considered a failure. You are entitled to three tries in a two-year period.

The examination is held over a two-day period and includes a theory section and a practical section. The theory section consists of about one hundred open-ended questions requiring short answers, and the practical section comprises 16 clinical situations in which you must follow precise instructions and intervene with simulated

patients. For more information, you can obtain the *Professional Examination Preparation Guide of the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec*.

#### 6. Obtain your permanent permit

Once you have completed the examination, you must meet two more conditions before obtaining your **permanent permit**:

##### a) Knowledge of French

If you have completed at least three years of schooling in French at the secondary or post-secondary level, you meet the requirements of the *Charter of the French Language*. Otherwise, you must pass the language examination administered by the *Office québécois de la langue française* (OQLF).

Knowledge of French is evaluated by means of a French examination administered by the Office québécois de la langue française. The examination is intended for anyone wishing to obtain a permit from any of the professional orders governed by the *Professional Code of Quebec*.

If you have not yet passed this French examination, the *Charter of the French Language* authorizes the Order to issue a one-year temporary permit to a nurse who graduated outside Quebec and who is deemed qualified to practise nursing in Quebec but who does not meet the requirements of the Charter.

With the authorization of the *Office québécois de la langue française* (OQLF), this permit can be renewed three times, allowing the holder to practise for four consecutive years. Since the temporary permit is valid for only one year, we suggest that you apply for a temporary permit only once your date of hiring has been confirmed.

Upon receipt of confirmation that you have passed the OQLF French examination, the Order will issue you your **permanent permit**.

## b) Disciplinary, criminal or penal offences

If you have been charged with or convicted of a criminal<sup>5</sup> or disciplinary<sup>6</sup> offence in Canada or abroad, or if you have been charged with or convicted of a penal offence relating to the unauthorized use of a reserved title or unlawful practice of a profession in Canada or abroad, the Order must review your case before issuing your permit. If it considers that the crime is related to the profession, the Order may refuse to issue a permit; if the tribunal or disciplinary authority has not yet rendered its decision, the Order's review may be suspended.

Once you have completed these conditions, you will be issued your permanent permit. This permit is granted to you only once, for your entire professional career.

## 7. Apply for entry on the Roll of the Order

A permit alone is not enough, however. To practise, nurses **must** be entered on the **Roll of the Order**<sup>7</sup> and pay the applicable fees. The Roll is the official record of OIIQ members and is updated every year.

As soon as you are entered on the Roll, you will receive an **attestation of entry on the Roll**, from the OIIQ, which you must show to your employer.

It is illegal to practise nursing in Quebec unless you are entered on the Roll of the OIIQ, i.e. you must be an OIIQ member in good standing.

We hope that this guide will help you achieve your goal of practising in Quebec. We look forward to having you join our profession here, soon!

5. Unless you have received a pardon.

6. Decisions applying to you rendered by the disciplinary council of another professional order in Quebec or by an equivalent authority outside Quebec, leading to the revocation of your licence (or an equivalent penalty), your being struck from the Roll, or the restriction or suspension of your right to practise the profession.

7. Entry on the Roll is valid from April 1 to March 31 of every year.

## Basic training for nurses in Quebec

There are basic training programs for nurses at both the college and university levels:

- At the college (CEGEP) level, the training lasts 3 years, after 11 years of elementary and secondary schooling. The technical program leads to a **Diploma of collegial studies (DEC) in nursing**.
- At the university level, the training lasts 3 years and follows 13 years of elementary, secondary and college studies. The university program leads to a **Bachelor of Nursing (BAC)**.

Nursing training at both the college and university levels comprises a minimum of 2,805 hours, including at least 2,145 hours of specific training in nursing, as follows:

- A minimum of 615 hours in medical and surgical nursing
- A minimum of 120 hours in mental health and psychiatric nursing.
- A minimum of 105 hours in adult and geriatric nursing.
- A minimum of 75 hours in perinatal nursing.
- A minimum of 90 hours in child and adolescent nursing.
- A minimum of 480 hours in biological science, including a total of at least 135 hours in microbiology, immunology and pharmacology.
- A minimum of 180 hours in social science.

At least 1,035 of the 2,145 hours of specific training must be devoted to clinical experience; at least 240 of the 1,035 hours of clinical experience must involve the consolidation of knowledge related to the legislative, ethical, organizational and sociocultural aspects of nursing practice.

## CANDIDATE FOR THE PROFESSION OF NURSING (CPN)

Any graduate from outside Quebec granted equivalency by the Bureau of the Order for her diploma or training, while awaiting the issue of her permit from the OIIQ.

### General conditions

Before practising as a CPN, you must obtain an attestation from the Order allowing you to practise as such. To obtain this attestation, you must send the OIIQ your employer's name and address and complete the other formalities with the Office of the OIIQ Registrar.

Note that a registration certificate is not proof that you have obtained CPN status.

### Place of practice

As a CPN, you may practise only in a centre operated by a public institution within the meaning of the *Act respecting health services and social services* or the *Act respecting health services and social services for Cree Native persons*. Consequently, you may not practise in a residence or a private practice. In case of doubt, please contact the Nurse-Consultant at the OIIQ.

## Working conditions according to the Regulation<sup>8</sup>

### Integration program

You may perform professional activities if you have completed the integration program allowing you to:

- consolidate your knowledge and skills;
- demonstrate your ability to perform professional activities;
- become familiar with the institution's policies and directives.

### Knowledge required

You must ensure, before performing any professional activities, that you have the appropriate knowledge and skills; otherwise you must refuse to perform the activity until you have received the necessary training.

### Supervision

You must practise under the supervision of a nurse, present in the care unit<sup>9</sup> where the acts are performed (in a long-term residence, the nurse must be present in the building) so that rapid intervention<sup>10</sup> on the patient is possible or to be able to respond quickly to any request by you. You may not be responsible for a care unit.

### Notes in user's record

You must record your interventions in the patient's record with your signature, followed by "CPN".

### Ethical obligations

CPNs must perform the authorized professional activities in compliance with the ethical obligations applicable to OIIQ members.

8. The *Regulation respecting the professional activities which may be performed by persons other than nurses* (R.S.Q. c. I-8, r. 0.01) is available on the OIIQ website.

9. Care unit means a clinical activity sector. Care units spread over several sites are excluded.

10. For rapid intervention, the nurse must be able to assess the patient's condition.

### Professional liability insurance offered by the OIIQ

You are covered by the professional liability insurance taken out by the OIIQ.

### End of status

You are authorized to practise as a CPN until any of the following occurs:

1. You do not pass the professional examination by the time limit provided for in the *Regulation respecting the terms and conditions for the issue of permits by the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec*.
2. You fail the professional examination three times.
3. More than 30 days elapse after the date on which the Order issued your permit.
4. More than 4 years elapse after the first professional examination session that follows the date on which you obtained your diploma giving access to the permit of the Order or the date of the decision of the Order to recognize your equivalent diploma or training for the purposes of issuing a permit.

### Professional activities

If you meet all the above conditions, you may perform all the activities performed by a nurse, with the exception of certain activities that CPNs are prohibited from performing under the *Regulation respecting the professional activities which may be performed by persons other than nurses*, as listed below.

Professional activities that CPNs **may not** perform, under the *Regulation respecting the professional activities which may be performed by persons other than nurses*:

1. Assessing the physical and mental condition of a symptomatic person in a family medicine group (FMG), a family medicine unit, a private medical clinic, a triage situation, an ambulatory clinic or in providing common services.

2. Providing clinical monitoring of the condition of the following persons, including:
  - 2.1 a person about to give birth who is undergoing monitoring in the case of a high-risk pregnancy;
  - 2.2 a person in a state of shock, with multiple traumas or requiring resuscitation in an emergency clinic or department;
  - 2.3 a person under hemodynamic monitoring by the insertion of catheters in the vascular system for purposes of monitoring cardiac function, blood volume and blood circulation.
3. Initiating diagnostic and therapeutic measures, according to a prescription.
4. Initiating diagnostic measures for the purposes of a screening operation under the *Public Health Act* (R.S.Q., c. S-2.2).
5. Determining the treatment plan for wounds and alterations of the skin and teguments.
6. Performing vaccinations as part of a vaccination operation under the *Public Health Act* (R.S.Q., c. S-2.2).
7. Making decisions as to the use of restraint measures.
8. Adjusting therapeutic nursing plans for all the above activities.



**Ordre  
des infirmières  
et infirmiers  
du Québec**