

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

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**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, [oiiq.org](http://oiiq.org).

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

**[oiiq.org/Admission à la profession/Infirmière formée hors Québec/Permis d'exercice/Infirmière diplômée hors Canada](http://oiiq.org/Admission%20à%20la%20profession/Infirmière%20formée%20hors%20Québec/Permis%20d'exercice/Infirmière%20diplômée%20hors%20Canada)**

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 over 360,000 members in 45 orders, 27 of them in the healthcare field. The main purpose of all these professional orders is to protect the public, ensuring that Quebecers 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, mostly women. **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. For more information: [oiq.org](http://oiq.org), e-mail [bureau-registratre@oiq.org](mailto:bureau-registratre@oiq.org), telephone 514 935-2501.

## 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 17 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 17 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.
- deciding to use isolation measures in accordance with the *Act respecting health services and social services* (c. S-4.2) and the *Act respecting health services and social services for Cree Native persons* (c. S-5);
- assessing mental disorders, except mental retardation, if the nurse has the university degree and clinical experience in psychiatric nursing care required under a regulation made in accordance with paragraph *g* of section 14; and
- assessing a child not yet admissible to preschool education who shows signs of developmental delay, in order to determine the adjustment and rehabilitation services required.

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

At the same time as you contact the OIIQ 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**.<sup>2</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. If so, please contact the Registrar's Office for details on the steps you will need to take.

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

You must first apply for recognition of equivalence, as explained in the *Guidelines* attached to this kit. As soon as you have provided your personal documents and paid the related fees, we will send you confirmation that your file has been opened and a letter requesting priority processing and giving authorization to communicate personal documents or information to the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (MIDI). You are to send this letter to the MIDI along with your request for a comparative evaluation of your studies completed outside of Quebec.

### 2. Obtain a decision from the Admission by Equivalence Committee

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>3</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, i.e. in caring for adults or seniors with reduced autonomy, in mental health, pediatrics and/or perinatal care, if their training in these fields 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, consult [www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca).

3. 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 9.

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.

To prepare for this examination, you can order the *Professional Examination Preparation Guide of the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec*. Download the order form from the "Publications" section of [oiiq.org](http://oiiq.org).

## 6. Obtain your permanent permit

Once you have completed the examination, the OIIQ issues you a regular permit, if you meet the requirements of the *Charter of the French Language* in terms of your knowledge of French, or provide you with the necessary documents to obtain a temporary permit, if you do not.

The Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) requires that every professional have an appropriate knowledge of French sufficient to practise his or her profession in French. You are deemed to have sufficient knowledge of French if you:<sup>4</sup>

- received, full time, no less than three years of secondary or post-secondary instruction provided in French;
- passed the fourth- or fifth-year secondary level examinations in French as the first language;
- in or after the 1985-86 school year, obtained a secondary school certificate in Quebec.

Otherwise, your knowledge of French is evaluated by means of a French examination administered by the OQLF. The examination is intended for anyone wishing to obtain a permit from any of the professional orders governed by the *Quebec Professional Code*.

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. We suggest that you apply for a temporary permit only once your date of hiring as a nurse in Quebec has been confirmed. With the authorization of the OQLF, this permit can be renewed three times, allowing the holder to practise for four consecutive years.

Upon receipt of confirmation that you have passed the OQLF French examination, the Order issues you a regular permit.

4. *Charter of the French Language*, s. 35.

### 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 offence 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.

## 7. Apply for entry on the annual record of members (the Roll) of the Order

A permit alone is not enough, however. To practise, you must be entered on the Roll of the Order, by completing an annual declaration and paying the applicable fees, and renew your entry on the Roll by March 31 every year. 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 of 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.

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.

## 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 whose diploma or training has been recognized as equivalent by the OIIQ waiting for a nursing permit to be issued by the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec.

### General conditions

Before practising as a CPN, you must obtain an attestation from the OIIQ to the effect that you are able to do so. To obtain this attestation, you must send your employer's contact information to the OIIQ and complete the other formalities with the Registrar's Office of the OIIQ. Note that a registration certificate is not proof that you have been granted CPN status.

### Practice location

As a CPN, you may perform your activities only in a centre operated by a public institution within the meaning of the *Act respecting health 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 private office. If in doubt, please contact the nurse consultant at the OIIQ.

## Working conditions according to the Regulation<sup>7</sup>

### Integration program

You may perform professional activities if you have completed the integration program whose objectives are 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 who is present on the patient care unit<sup>8</sup> in question (in the case of long-term care, the nurse must be in the building) so that the nurse is able to intervene rapidly<sup>9</sup> with the patient or respond rapidly to your requests. You are not authorized to be responsible for a patient care unit.

### User's record

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

### Ethical obligations

A CPN must perform the professional activities she is allowed to perform in compliance with the ethical obligations applicable to OIIQ members.

7. *The Regulation respecting the professional activities which may be performed by persons other than nurses* (R.S.Q., c. 1-8, r.0.01).

8. A patient care unit refers to a sector of clinical activities. However, patient care units spread over more than one site are excluded.

9. To intervene rapidly with a patient, 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 subscribed to by the OIIQ for this purpose.

### Loss of status

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

1. You do not pass the professional examination within the time period allowed under 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 have elapsed since the date of issue of the OIIQ permit.
4. More than four years have elapsed since the first professional examination session following the date on which you obtained your diploma giving access to an OIIQ permit or the date of the decision by the OIIQ granting you a diploma equivalence or training equivalence for the issue a permit.

### Professional activities

You may perform all the activities performed by a nurse provided that you meet all the practice conditions described above, with the exception of those stipulated in the *Regulation respecting the professional activities which may be performed by persons other than nurses* and listed below.

Professional activities which **may not be performed** by a CPN under the *Regulation respecting the professional activities which may be performed by persons other than nurses*:

1. Assess 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. Provide clinical monitoring of the condition of the following persons, including the following:

- 2.1 a person about to give birth who is undergoing monitoring in the case of a high-risk pregnancy;
- 2.2 a person who is in shock, a person with multi-trauma or a person who needs to be resuscitated in an emergency service or department;
- 2.3 a person undergoing hemodynamic monitoring through the insertion of catheters in the vascular system for the purpose of checking cardiac function, blood volume and blood circulation.

3. Initiate diagnostic and therapeutic measures, according to a prescription.
4. Initiate diagnostic measures for the purposes of a screening operation under the *Public Health Act* (R.S.Q., c. S-2.2).
5. Determine the treatment plan for wounds and alterations of the skin and integuments.
6. Perform vaccinations as part of a vaccination operation under the *Public Health Act* (R.S.Q., c. S-2.2).
7. Make decisions as to the use of restraint measures.
8. Adjust the therapeutic nursing plan for all of the above activities.



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