



VisaScreen®: Visa Credentials Assessment Requirements

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The CGFNS/ICHP *VisaScreen*®: Visa Credentials Assessment is comprised of an educational analysis, licensure validation, English language proficiency assessment, and, for registered nurses only, an exam of nursing knowledge. Once you successfully complete all elements of the *VisaScreen*® assessment, you receive a ICHP *VisaScreen*® certificate, which can be presented to a consular office or, in the case of status adjustment, to the attorney general as part of a visa application.

Educational analysis

The educational review ensures that your secondary and professional education meets all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements for the profession that you intend to practice. It also makes sure that your education is comparable to the education of U.S. graduates in that same field.

Registered nurses must meet all of the educational requirements of a first level, general (registered) nurse. CGFNS/ICHP requires evidence that you have:

- successfully completed a secondary school education that is separate from your nursing education
- graduated from a government-approved, two-year general nursing program of at least two years in length and
- received a minimum number of theoretical instruction hours and clinical practice hours in each of the following
 - nursing care of the adult (which includes both medical and surgical nursing)
 - maternal/infant nursing (excluding gynecology)
 - nursing care of children (pediatrics)
 - psychiatric/mental health nursing (excluding neurology)

Physical therapists must

- have an education comparable to that of a U.S.-educated physical therapist
- be recognized by that country's Ministry of Education/Health as an educational institution approved to grant degrees/certificates
- meet minimum credit requirements in general education, foundation sciences, clinical sciences and clinical education
- include with their application a self-reported, typewritten summary of their supervised clinical experiences obtained during their physical therapy program that includes:
 - dates and hours of each supervised clinical experience
 - facility type where each supervised clinical experience took place
 - overall focus of each supervised clinical experience (eg, orthopedics, pediatrics, geriatrics, medical/surgical) and
 - approximate number of patient cared for during supervised clinical experiences in each of the following age ranges: 0–18, 19–55, 56 and over

Occupational therapists must contact their professional school and have them send the following directly to CGFNS/ICHP:

- details of supervised clinical fieldwork including occupational therapy supervisor's name and credentials and
- the number of hours/weeks of each experience and the client types treated

Clinical laboratory scientists (medical technologists) and **clinical laboratory technicians** (medical technicians) must contact their professional school and have them send the following directly to CGFNS/ICHP:

- details of clinical laboratory practice hours in the following areas: clinical chemistry, hematology, hemostasis, urine and body fluid analysis, specimen collection and handling, parasitology, mycology, microbiology, virology, immunohematology and immunology.

Speech language pathologists and **audiologists** must contact their professional school and have them send the following directly to CGFNS/ICHP:

- details of clinical observation and clinical practice hours for
 - the evaluation and treatment of speech disorders in both children and adults and
 - the evaluation and treatment of language disorders in both children and adults

Licensure validation

The licensure review is an evaluation of all of your licenses/registrations/diplomas that have been issued including initial, past and current. The issuing authority sends the validation directly to CGFNS/ICHP to confirm that you have completed all practice requirements and that licensure has not been suspended or revoked. If validation of your license/registration/diploma for another CGFNS program is more than three years old, they must be validated again.

Registered nurses only: an exam of nursing knowledge

As part of the CGFNS/ICHP *VisaScreen*® Assessment, registered nurses applying for an occupational visa must have a passing score on either the CGFNS Qualifying Exam® or the NCLEX-RN® to provide proof of their nursing knowledge.

For an eligibility review, CGFNS/ICHP needs to receive

- The completed and signed *VisaScreen*®: Visa Credentials Assessment paper application form or submitted online application.
- A bank check or international money order (drawn on a U.S. bank in U.S. funds) made payable to CGFNS or credit card payment (Visa, MasterCard or Discover) for the full *VisaScreen*® application fee in U.S. dollars. DO NOT SEND CASH.

- Documentation of secondary school education or external exam certificate with literal English translation, including a *Certificate of Accuracy*, if not in English (see *VisaScreen® Application Handbook*, page 10).
- The completed *Request for Academic Records* form and full academic records/transcripts from each of your professional schools.
- **For occupational therapists only:** a report on the nature and depth of your occupational therapy fieldwork, including your supervisor's name and credentials, directly from your professional school.
- **For physical therapists only:** Self-reported clinical summary of your supervised clinical experience completed during your professional training.
- The completed *Request for Validation of License/Registration/Diploma* form from each licensing agency where you have ever held a license/registration as a professional in your health care field or, in cases where your diploma authorizes legal practice, this same form and a copy of the original language diploma with literal English translation mailed to CGFNS/ICHP from the issuing authority that issued your diploma.
- **For registered nurses only:** Documentation verifying successful completion of the NCLEX-RN® (or State Board Test Pool Exam) directly from the relevant state board of nursing (if applicable) or evidence of passing the CGFNS Qualifying Exam®.
- One passport-size photograph signed on the front.
- Certified English translation of all documents not in English (see *VisaScreen® Application Handbook*, page 10).

Note: CGFNS/ICHP is unable to accept any academic records/transcripts or registration/license/diploma documentation sent by email or fax. All official documentation must be in paper format with the appropriate seals and signatures, sent to CGFNS/ICHP by mail or courier.

Passing scores by profession

ETS option 1		
Health care profession	TOEFL iBT Total	TOEFL iBT Speaking
Registered nurse	83	26
Practical/vocational nurse	79	26
Physical therapist	89	26
Occupational therapist	89	26
Speech language pathologist	83	26
Audiologist	83	26
Clinical laboratory scientist (medical technologist)	83	26
Clinical laboratory technician (medical technician)	79	26
Physician assistant	83	26

English language proficiency assessment

Applicants educated in countries not designated as being English-exempt must submit passing scores from one of the following groups of English examinations:

- **TOEFL-iBT** (Internet-Based Test) measuring all four skills of communication: reading, writing, listening and speaking
- **IELTS** (International English Language Testing System) **Academic format** for registered nurses, physician assistants, speech language pathologists, audiologists, clinical laboratory scientists (medical technologists)
- **IELTS General Training format** for medical laboratory technicians (medical technicians) and practical/vocational nurses.
- Physical therapists and occupational therapists may take **TOEFL iBT only**.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) does not allow the combining passing scores both IELTS and ETS tests.

The English language proficiency assessment confirms that you have demonstrated the required competency in oral and written English by submitting passing scores on tests approved by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. See **Passing score by profession** table below. Passing English scores are valid for two years.

For you to be exempt from the English language proficiency requirement for the *VisaScreen®* assessment, you must meet ALL of the following criteria:

- educated in one of the listed exempt countries: Australia, Canada (except Quebec), Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) or the United States.
- where educated, the language of instruction and textbooks was English

IELTS option 2		
Health care profession	IELTS Overall	IELTS Spoken Band
Registered nurse	6.5 (Academic)	7
Practical/vocational nurse	6.0 (General) or 6.0 (Academic)	7
Speech language pathologist	6.5 (Academic)	7
Audiologist	6.5 (Academic)	7
Clinical laboratory scientist (medical technologist)	6.5 (Academic)	7
Clinical laboratory technician (medical technician)	6.0 (General) or 6.0 (Academic)	7
Physician assistant	6.5 (Academic)	7

Section 212(r) Certified Statement

Section 212(r) of the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act* (IIRIRA) authorizes CGFNS to issue certified statements to nurses educated outside the United States who meet the following criteria

1. Educated in one of the listed exempt countries: Australia, Barbados, Canada (including only the following approved Quebec schools: McGill University and Dawson College in Montreal, Vanier College in St. Laurent, JohnAbbott College in Sainte Anne de Bellevue, and HeritageCollege in Gatineau), Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, South Africa, Trinidad/Tobago, the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) or the United States.
2. The nursing school must be on the list that CGFNS established in 1999 after its education review of the countries listed in number 1. Any school founded after May 1999 must be reviewed and accepted by CGFNS/ICHP.
3. An approved nursing school in one of the countries listed in number 1 provides graduation verification to CGFNS/ICHP stating that the language of instruction and the textbooks was in English. The verification must carry the official school seal and signatures. CGFNS/ICHP does not require full transcripts.
4. Passed NCLEX®-RN.
5. Currently licensed to practice in one of five states: Florida, Georgia, New York, Illinois and Michigan. CGFNS/ICHP must receive a license validation from that state board of nursing.

Visascreen® streamlined process

IIRIRA also authorizes CGFNS to perform a streamlined process for applicants born outside of the United States who received their entry-level professional education in the United States. This health care worker is exempt from the educational comparability review and English language proficiency examination. CGFNS/ICHP will require that the school send a graduation verification with the official school seal and signatures. Nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech language pathologists and audiologists qualify if their U.S. education program was accredited by the following:

- **Nurses** who have graduated from an entry-level program accredited by the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education or a nurse educated outside the United States who then completes an Associate Degree (AD), Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or combined Bachelors of Science (BS)/Masters of Science (MS) degrees from an accredited U.S. nursing program. The graduation verification must carry the official school seal and signatures.
- **Occupational therapists** who have graduated from a program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education of the American Occupational Therapy Association.
- **Physical therapists** who have graduated from a program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education of the American Physical Therapy Association.
- **Speech language pathologists and audiologists** who have graduated from a program accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in audiology and speech language pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Visascreen® reprocess an expired application

For service that has not resulted in the issuing of a *VisaScreen*® certificate within 12 months of initial application date because program requirements were not met an applicant will need:

- The completed online application or completed and signed paper *VisaScreen*®: *Visa Credentials Assessment Reprocess Application* form or a submitted online order to continue the *VisaScreen*® assessment
- The U.S. dollar fee for reprocess located at www.cgfns.org/sections/apply/fees.shtml#1. Please see payment methods at the end of this document.

VisaScreen® Renewal Application

VisaScreen® certificates are valid for five years from issue date. Unless you have obtained a permanent visa or have become a United States citizen, you must reapply to CGFNS/ICHP and obtain a new certificate prior to the expiration date of your current *VisaScreen*® certificate. It is recommended to begin the renewal process six months before the expiration of your current certificate.

CGFNS/ICHP needs to receive:

- The completed online application or completed and signed paper *VisaScreen*® *Renewal Application* form located at www.cgfns.org/files/pdf/apps/VisaScreenReApp.pdf.
- The U.S. dollar fee for renewal located at www.cgfns.org/sections/apply/fees.shtml#1. Please see payment methods at the end of this document.
- The completed *Request for Validation of License/Registration/Diploma* form from each licensing authority where you have ever held a license/registration as a health care professional in your field; or, in cases where your diploma authorizes legal practice, this same form mailed to CGFNS/ICHP from the authority that issued your diploma. If you hold a lifetime license or certificate to practice, a validation must still be completed to document that there were no suspensions, revocations or restrictions on your practice since the initial validation was received by CGFNS/ICHP.
- If more three years has passed since your last validation, CGFNS/ICHP must have updated validations for every license/registration/diploma that have ever been issued to you.
- The English requirement can be waived if you can provide proof of U.S. employment in the health care profession listed on your *VisaScreen*® certificate for at least 27–36 months — including nine months of the year before the date your renewal application is submitted. Your employer will need to submit an employment summary to CGFNS/ICHP on corporate letterhead with the appropriate signature for the English requirement to be waived.
- Proof of English language proficiency by examination (passing English scores are valid for two years).
- Certified English translation of all documents not in English.

Some licensing authorities may charge a fee for verifying your registrations/licenses/diplomas. You are responsible for these and any other additional fees associated with processing your *VisaScreen*® application.

CGFNS/ICHP is unable to accept any documents sent by email or fax. All official documents must be in paper format with the appropriate seals and signatures, directly sent to CGFNS/ICHP by mail or courier.

VisaScreen® Expedited Review Service

CGFNS International offers a five-day VisaScreen® Expedited Review Service to all VisaScreen® and VisaScreen® renewal applicants. To be eligible, all VisaScreen® requirements must be met and all documents must be received. View availability and apply online through CGFNS Connect at <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/login.jsp>. There is a non-refundable \$500 fee for the VisaScreen® Expedited Review Service.

The VisaScreen® Expedited Review Service has limited availability but additional spaces are open for applicants that:

- have a Request for Evidence
- have an offer for employment
- have a pending expiration of a visa or licensing application
- are transitioning from a student visa to an employment visa

Applicants that meet one of these requirements, and need additional assistance, should call the CGFNS Customer Care Center during the operating hours listed on the Contact Us page at <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/processContactUs.do>.

Other CGFNS services

- *Document translation* — This is to request that CGFNS have your required documents translated into English.
- *Forwarding academic records/transcripts* — This is a request for CGFNS to only send copies of your official academic records/transcripts to a licensing board or educational institution (this service does NOT include an evaluation of the documents).
- *Forwarding academic records/transcripts and registration/licenses/certification* — This is a request for CGFNS to only send copies of both your official academic records/transcripts and your official professional license/registration/diploma validations or diploma, if it gives authorization to practice, to a licensing board or educational institution (this service does NOT include an evaluation of the documents).

Fees for other CGFNS services can be found at <http://www.cgfns.org/sections/apply/fees.shtml>

Payment methods

Payment must be in U.S. dollars. If you have applied online and are sending payment through postal mail, please print out the voucher and submit it with your payment. Pay using one of these methods:

- By Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit card payment online at <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/login.jsp>
- By Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit card through postal mail, download the Credit Card Payment form located at www.cgfns.org/files/pdf/forms/Credit_Card_Payment_form.pdf
- A bank check or international money order (drawn on a U.S. bank) made payable to CGFNS/ICHP

Please do not send cash through the mail. Personal checks are not accepted. If paying by postal mail, send to CGFNS International, Suite 400, 3600 Market Street, Philadelphia PA 19104-2651 USA