

## Pathways to Excellence in Nursing Education: Certification as a Nurse Educator in the Global Perspective

Larry E Simmons, PhD, RN, CNE, NEA-BC<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Director, Certified Nurse Educator Program, National League for Nursing, USA.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, DNP Faculty, South University, Tampa, Florida, USA.

### \*Correspondence:

Larry E Simmons, Assistant Professor, DNP, Faculty, South University, Tampa, Florida, USA, E-mail: lasimmons@nlm.org.

Received: 03 October 2017; Accepted: 30 October 2017

**Citation:** Larry E Simmons. Pathways to Excellence in Nursing Education: Certification as a Nurse Educator in the Global Perspective. *Nur Primary Care*. 2017; 1(5): 1-2.

### ABSTRACT

*The National League for Nursing Certified Nurse Educator (CNE®) was established in 2005 to recognize standards of excellence by educators practicing in nursing education. The certification was made international with the opening of testing to nurse educators around the world in 2016. More than 6,000 nurse educators have been successful in examination testing. This article will address the history and current status of the certified nurse educator program as well as the development of a new certification as a clinical nurse educator. The new certification should be available in the late 2018.*

### Keywords

Nursing education, Certification, Employers.

### Introduction

In a position statement, the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) describes certification as “the formal recognition of the specialized body of knowledge, skills, and experience demonstrated by the achievement of standards identified by the nursing specialty to promote optimal health outcomes” [1]. Nursing certification has developed into a valued attribute for the nursing profession. Many nursing certifications have developed since the early 1990s. Certification is closely identified with patient care outcomes. Employers are showing great interest in certifications of staff members and may assist the staff nurse in the certification process by offering support in various ways, including financially. The successful certification candidate may also have feelings of competence and self-confidence having met the standards of excellence dictated by the certification.

Nurse educators also clearly impact the promotion of optimal health outcomes in the preparation of nurses to enter into practice. The transition of nursing education from the hospital-based practice setting into more formal academic settings changed the role of the

nurse educator from a clinical practice to a faculty educator role [2]. The nurse educator is now seen as both a skilled professional nurse and a competent educator [3].

In 2005, the National League for Nursing identified eight core competencies and 66 task statements associated with the competencies that define the role of the academic nurse educator [2]. This delineation of the role led the way to the development of a certification examination for nurse educators, first administered to a pilot of nurse educators in 2005. The Certified Nurse Educator (CNE®) was born.

Certification of the program as a certifying body by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) was achieved in 2009, with recertification obtained in 2014 for five more years. New test forms have been developed annually with the 2018 versions being identified as Forms 15 and 16. The latest practice analysis was concluded in 2017 maintaining currency of the certification test plan with current nurse educator practice. The newest certification developed is aimed at the clinical nurse educator (working with nursing students in clinical settings) which is now scheduled for release in 2018.

Responding to many requests of nurse educator faculty

---

internationally about meeting the criteria for candidacy for the certification (originally the criteria included a valid U.S. registered nurse license), the CNE Board of Commissioners, in 2016, voted to removed that eligibility requirement and replace it with the criteria of an unencumbered nursing license or registration in the country where the nurse educator resides. This changed opened the exam candidacy to nurse educators not residing and/or teaching in the United States.

With the opening of candidacy this way, there were many considerations of how to proceed. Focus groups outside of the United States were conducted that included a review of the certification test plan. This goal of these groups was the identification of areas on the exam that did not relate to the practice of the nurse educator in those settings. Very few tasks were identified as irrelevant. However, some of the terminology used demonstrated to be very U.S.-centric. Although the concepts identified might be the same, the terms used to describe the concepts were different. This led to a broadening of the language used in the plan and in the test items themselves. The Test Development Committee consistently reviews test items on an annual basis, inclusive of an eye on the terms that need to be more global in perspective. Another issue arose about language. The decision was made to retain the examination in the English language.

The next issue to address was the educational qualifications for meeting eligibility for the examination and certification. There has been more intensive inspection of the academic performance and experiences across the spectrum of nursing certifications. These inspections often include documentation of a program of study, course syllabic, and topic outlines [4]. The Commission for Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) has long been established as an agency that does extensive work to certify that nurses graduating from programs of nursing located outside of the United States and seeking to be employed as nurses in the United States have met eligibility equivalence of education to apply to take the licensure exams for nurses required in the United States.

CGFNS is working in partnership with the National League for Nursing CNE program to validate the education of nurse educators to ensure the meeting of eligibility requirements for the certification candidacy. The process for international testers is initiated first with CGFNS for validation and then referral to register with the certification program to take the examination.

Fights [5] identified that the advantages of certification for nurses include not just the benefits gained by the employing institution, but personal, professional, and possibly economic benefits for the educator achieving the certification. Academic institutions, more and more, are asking for certified nurse educators, and some have declared a goal of 100% of the nurse educators employed by the institution is certified. Nurse educator certification has also become a matter of interest of governing boards of nursing in the United States. Certification trends and research related to nursing certification and nurse educator certification will continue to be a focus in the years to come.

Obtaining certification is a benchmark of excellence for nursing and nurse educators. It also represents a commitment to life-long learning and demonstrates expert knowledge and competence in the area of the certification.

## References

1. Niebuhr B, Biel M. The value of specialty nursing certification. *Nursing Outlook*. 2007; 55: 176-181.
2. National League for Nursing. *The scope of practice for academic nurse educators*. New York, NY: Author. 2005.
3. National League for Nursing. *The scope of practice for academic nurse educators: 2012 revisions*. New York, NY: Author. 2012.
4. Baker K, Lockwood S. Promoting certification success: Whose job is it? *Clinical Nurse Specialist®*. 2015; 5-6.
5. Flights SD. Reap the benefits of certification. *Lippincott's Nursing Career Directory*. 2012; 10-11.