

Credentials Evaluation Service: an in-depth look into education and licensure credentials

As national boundaries continue to shrink in the ever-widening global marketplace and more and more healthcare workers seek opportunities outside their country's borders, U.S. hospitals, educational institutions and licensing authorities are finding themselves faced with new dilemmas on how

to decipher whether a foreign-educated healthcare worker meets U.S. education, licensure and practice standards. The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) was created to address just these types of dilemmas.

CGFNS is an immigration-neutral, non-profit organization based in Philadelphia, PA, USA, and is an internationally recognized authority on education, registration and licensure of nurses and healthcare professionals worldwide. Among its many services is the Credentials Evaluation Service (CES), developed by CGFNS in 1993 as an objective evaluation and reporting service that analyzes the education and licensure earned outside of the United States in terms of comparability to U.S. standards.

This objective evaluation carefully assesses documents received from source agencies, verifying and appraising an applicant's educational and registration/licensure credentials.

The resulting CES report serves as a valuable tool for regulatory/licensing agencies, specialty certification authorities, academic institutions, immigration attorneys, prospective employers and others. It also helps qualified applicants demonstrate the merits of their credentials with regard to U.S.

standards, facilitating their pursuit of educational or career opportunities in the United States.

The Credentials Evaluation Service analyzes the credentials of multiple types and levels of healthcare professionals educated outside the United States, or with an international educational background, who wish to pursue a healthcare professional degree or employment in the United States. Unlike the Credentials



Review service of the Certification Program, which evaluates an applicant's eligibility for the CGFNS Qualifying Exam and TOEFL, the Credentials Evaluation Service is designed to provide factual information to assist CES report recipients in their decision-making. A CES report is advisory in nature and does not make specific placement recommendations.

CES reports are highly beneficial to regulatory agencies (such as a U.S. State Board of Nursing) prior to licensure; by governmental agencies prior to immigration; by schools to assist in the admission or placement of a student working towards higher education; or by employers to evaluate a candidate's preparation. These CES

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CGFNS bestows inaugural award

CGFNS has awarded the 2001 CGFNS International Distinguished Leadership Award to the Honorable Syringa Marshall Burnett, CD, MA, BAScN, PHN, HNS, RM, RGN, President of the Senate, Jamaica, West Indies, and Chair, Department of Advance Nursing Education, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of the West Indies, Mona.

Dr. Burnett's illustrious career spans more than 30 years in nursing education, research and leadership.

In addition to her work in the healthcare community, Dr. Burnett has been committed to a life of public service. Dr. Burnett has served as a Senator and Deputy President of the Jamaican Senate, and is currently President of the Senate. She is the first nurse

and only the second woman ever elected President.

The CGFNS International Distinguished Leadership Award was established to recognize individuals who have demonstrated outstanding international, professional and personal achievement that serves as a model for success in the global healthcare community. This is the inaugural year for the award, which will be bestowed annually by the CGFNS Board of Trustees.

The award consists of a commemorative plaque, a sponsored symposium in the leadership area of the recipient and a tribute dinner in honor of the recipient.

This year's symposium and tribute dinner was held October 31, in Philadelphia.

The symposium, *Globalization: International Health Policy and Nursing*, acknowledged Dr. Burnett's career in nursing education and research, as well as her superior leadership in the Jamaican Senate.

Speakers at the symposium were designated as Adele Herwitz Distinguished Scholars in honor of CGFNS' founding Executive Director, and received a commemorative plaque.

This year's speakers and Adele Herwitz Distinguished Scholars were: The Honorable Dr. Richard Bernal, Jamaican Representative to the World Trade Organization, Dr. Lucille A. Joel, RN, FAAN, ICN Representative and CGFNS Board of Trustees Member, and Elizabeth A. Downes, MSN, RN-C, FNP, Assistant Professor and Academic Program Coordinator, Lillian Carter Center for International Nursing, Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, Emory University. Dr. Burnett concluded the symposium with a presentation on nursing in the Caribbean.

Following the symposium, the evening kicked off with a



reception, featuring the music of the renowned Richard Rome Trio and a chance to meet the award recipient.

The evening continued with a tribute dinner honoring Dr. Burnett. Tribute speakers toasted the award recipient, followed by the award presentation and musical salute by the Steel Kings, a Caribbean steel drum band.

About this newsletter

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CGFNS creates Credentials Verification Service for New York State

CGFNS has created a new service this year, the Credentials Verification Service for New York State (CVS), to independently verify credentials of foreign-educated healthcare professionals who are seeking licensure in New York State.

The New York State Education Department requires that foreign-educated registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants obtain independent verification of the authenticity of their cre-

ditionals from a State Education Department approved credentials verification service. CGFNS, a world leader in evaluation of international healthcare credentials, was authorized by the New York State Education Department to provide such a service.

The CVS program independently collects and verifies the authenticity of an applicant's educational and licensure/registration credentials. Once verified, the credentials are forwarded to the New York State Education Department to be evaluated as part of the applicant's licensure application.

Exam centers in India and Kuwait opened

The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) is pleased to announce that it is opening a new exam center in Bangalore, India, and re-opening an exam center in Kuwait City, Kuwait. Both sites will be open for the March 13, 2002 Qualifying Exam and all exams thereafter.

CGFNS is also considering the possibility of opening additional Indian exam sites in the future.

The exam center number for the Bangalore, India, location is 850 and the exam center number for the Kuwait City, Kuwait, location is 905.

Applicants who are interested in taking the March exam, or any exam thereafter, in Bangalore need to indicate the exam center number 850 as their choice of exam center on the Certification Program application, and applicants who are interested in taking the exam in Kuwait City need to indicate the exam center number 905.

CGFNS is pleased to begin offering its Qualifying Exam in India. We expect to be able to accommodate approximately 1,500 test-takers at our exam center in Bangalore. Should applications for the Bangalore site exceed that number, we will have no choice but to ask that those applicants select an alternative exam center, which would be outside of India. Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

CGFNS Applications On-line!

CGFNS now provides applications for most of its programs in Adobe PDF Format which can be downloaded and printed from your desktop. Just log onto the CGFNS web site at www.cgfns.org and you can download applications for the Credentials Evaluation Service, the VisaScreen program and the Credentials Verification Service for New York State.

2002 Qualifying Exam Dates

March 13, 2002
(Deadline: Dec. 12, 2001)

July 10, 2002
(Deadline: April 10, 2002)

November 13, 2002
(Deadline: August 14, 2002)

CES Reports provide useful, detailed evaluations

What makes the Credentials Evaluation Service unique from programs offered by other credentialing agencies is the CES Report, an in-depth, detailed report that evaluates and analyzes credentials that most other organizations merely provide the barest details on or overlook entirely. This objective evaluation carefully assesses documents received from source agencies, verifying and appraising an applicant's educational and registration/licensure credentials.

CGFNS has 25 years of experience in credentials evaluation, and is the only credentials evaluation organization dedicated primarily to the credentialing of foreign-educated healthcare professionals, with an emphasis on nurses. Many of CGFNS' programs are required by regulatory/licensing agencies, specialty certification authorities, academic institutions and others.

In addition, CGFNS was named in section 343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 as an organization qualified to offer a federal screening program for foreign-educated healthcare professionals who wish to attain a permanent (immigrant) visa. CGFNS is the *only* organization approved by the government to provide this screening program for nurses, speech-language pathologists and audiologists, medical technologists and technicians and physicians assistants.

The service offers three levels of reports from which to choose. The differences among the reports are related to the amount of analysis undertaken. One of the benefits of the program is

that the CES allows the recipient (i.e., university admissions office, U.S. State Board of Nursing, hospital, etc.) to determine the level of report an applicant needs to have completed which best suits the recipient's needs.

The **General Report** evaluates information on education credentials such as: entrance requirements and dates of attendance for completed academic programs; whether academic programs are government approved; length and nature of study; language of instruction and textbooks; what the academic degree gives access to; a comparability statement and more.

The General Report also includes information on registration/license credentials such as: type of credential, issuing agency and date of issue; education required to attain registration/license; scope of practice for attained registration/licensure credentials; comparisons with U.S. registration/licensure credentials and more.

The **Healthcare Profession and Science Course-by-Course Report** includes all of the data in the General Report and a course-by-course analysis of all profession-specific and science coursework. This report also includes information about other pathways to the same educational/licensure credentials, where appropriate.

The **Full Education Course-by-Course Report** includes all of the data in the other two levels of reporting and a course-by-course analysis of all coursework in an applicant's health-care/post-secondary education. Reports prepared for academic institutions also include a conversion of credit hours.

report recipients determine the level of report needed by the applicants. The CES is useful for any internationally educated healthcare professional, regardless of where the individual was educated or licensed/registered outside the United States. The fees for the CES are reasonable and are borne by the applicant.

The CES report, customized to meet specific informational requirements, provides the right set of details to enable accurate decision-making. Tailoring the report also helps contain its cost. The report includes copies of original transcripts from source institutions and validations of registration/licensure from the issuing authorities.

The service offers three

levels of reports from which to choose. The differences among the reports are related to the amount of analysis undertaken. The decision of which report to select is generally made by the recipient of the report, i.e., a university admissions office, U.S. State Board of Nursing, hospital, etc.

General Report

Information includes entrance requirements and dates of attendance for completed academic programs, scope of practice for attained registration/licensure credentials and comparisons with U.S. educational and registration/licensure credentials.

Healthcare Profession and Science Course-by-Course Report

Information includes all of

the data in the General Report and a course-by-course analysis of all profession-specific and science coursework. This report also includes information about other pathways to the same educational/licensure credentials, where appropriate.

Full Education Course-by-Course Report

Information includes all of the data in the other two levels of reporting and a course-by-course analysis of all coursework in an applicant's healthcare/post secondary education. Reports prepared for academic institutions also include a conversion of credit hours.

Unique Features of the CES Report

Each report incorporates a careful analysis of each cre-

dential in the applicant's non-healthcare and professional education. The report also includes country-specific background information on schools and universities the applicant has attended and details on the language of academic instruction and textbooks. The service identifies, analyzes and explains each credential, ultimately presenting it in terms of its comparability to U.S. standards.

As the number of foreign-educated healthcare professionals seeking opportunity in the U.S. continues to rise, the Credentials Evaluation Service plays a pivotal role in providing a comprehensive, necessary analysis of their education and registration/license credentials.

Mark
your calendar

CGFNS will be exhibiting at the following conferences. If you will be attending any of these conferences, please stop by the CGFNS booth. We would love to see you there.

November 10-14
SIGMA THETA TAU
INTERNATIONAL, 36TH BIENNIAL
CONVENTION
Indianapolis, IN

January 10-12
CLEAR 2001 ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
San Antonio, TX