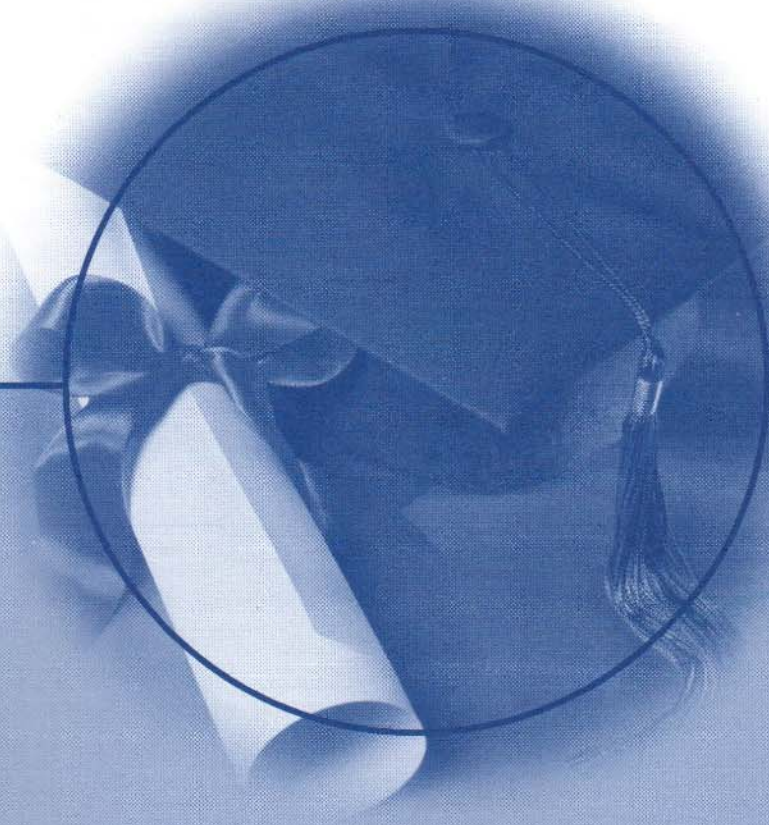


Pathways to Educational Mobility
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The Revised New Jersey Articulation Model for Nursing Education



**Fuld Leadership Council
Colleagues in Caring
New Jersey State Nurses Association
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The Revised New Jersey Articulation Model

Executive Summary

In 1992, the New Jersey State Nurses Association (NJSNA) appointed a task force of nursing educators to develop a statewide articulation model that would create a seamless approach to articulation and enable nurses to move through educational levels with greater ease. As a result of two years of work by the taskforce, a voluntary statewide articulation model was developed and the New Jersey Articulation Model for Nursing Education was published. The publication was distributed to all schools of nursing within the state.

Both the original NJSNA Articulation Model and this revised New Jersey Articulation Model are designed to facilitate educational mobility for Licensed Practical, Associate Degree, and Diploma nursing graduates. The revised Model is the result of work completed by the Fuld Leadership Council, formed as a result of a Helene Fuld Articulation grant to the New Jersey Colleagues in Caring. In 2001, the New Jersey nursing community was invited to participate in two working sessions to understand concepts of articulation and to participate in providing feedback for the revision of the Model.

This revised Articulation Model includes some of the concepts from the original NJSNA Model, adds new ones, and eliminates others. RN/LPN licensure is required for admission to a Diploma, Associate Degree or Baccalaureate program for an articulating student. For the LPN articulating to the Associate Degree or Diploma program in nursing, credit is granted for the first nursing course based on licensure. These credits are held in escrow until the student successfully completes one semester of clinical nursing course work at the receiving institution. The concepts of time since graduation and work experience for both LPN and RN students were eliminated in the revised Model. All of the concepts in the revised Articulation Model have been discussed, revised, and clarified with feedback from the nursing community. Expected outcomes, evaluation, and a time frame are included in this revised Model.

Similar to the expectations of the members of the original taskforce, nurses in the state expect that this revised model will “facilitate the educational process of students, aid faculty in helping students to advance, and provide a relevant approach that validates and values prior learning and experience” (NJSNA, 1994, p. 1).



The Revised New Jersey Articulation Model

Since its inception in 1996, the New Jersey Colleagues in Caring, a project funded jointly by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and state stakeholders, has had a goal to develop a seamless state educational infrastructure that fosters a clear route to educational advancement for nursing graduates. To facilitate that goal, a Helene Fuld Health Trust educational mobility grant was received in 2000. A Fuld Leadership Council was appointed that included members from education and service. In May of 2001, an educational workshop was held for members of the nursing education and practice sectors. In November of 2001, a working session was held for educators to revise the concepts of the original model. This revised Articulation Model is a result of the work by the state nursing community and the Fuld Leadership Council and acknowledges that articulation between nursing programs enables nurses to advance their education by recognizing their prior education and experience.

Concepts of the Revised Model

The Articulation Model remains focused on two areas of educational mobility: (1) Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) becoming Registered Nurses (RN) by completing an Associate Degree (AD) or Diploma (DI) nursing program; and (2) Registered Nurses earning a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing (BSN). Each area has six concepts that were addressed: competency, testing, time and

work experience, bridge/role course, general education courses, and writing/speech competencies. An outline of the concepts of the revised Model can be found in Tables 1 and 2 on page 6 and 7.

Each area has the license, LPN or RN, as the criterion for admission/matriculation. Therefore, the LPN license or the RN license is required for articulating students to enroll in the nursing courses of AD, DI, or BSN programs. All prospective students must meet the admission criteria for the receiving schools. Based on the successful completion of the NCLEX-PN, the student will be granted credit for the first RN clinical nursing course. The credits will be placed in escrow until one semester of RN clinical course work at the receiving school is completed successfully. At the discretion of the receiving school, credit may be granted for a second nursing course, a challenge examination may be offered, or the course may be taken for credit.

After successful completion of the NCLEX-RN, RN students may enroll in a BSN program. Each program will determine the number of nursing credits that can be transferred. However, no more than 38 additional nursing credits will be required to complete the degree program. Credits that are granted through non-traditional approaches such as portfolio evaluation or evaluation of work experience will be held in escrow until the student successfully completes one semester of clinical nursing course work at the receiving institution. Upon successful completion of the NCLEX-RN, international credits may be transferred according to the school's policies.



The intent of the Model is to rely on the NCLEX examinations as the gatekeeper, without the student undergoing any additional testing. Programs may require skill assessments in some areas, but they may not be used as a determinate of admission or acceptance of credits. Challenge examinations may be offered to students for additional credits. Schools may elect to offer workshops to assist the students to prepare for the challenge examinations.

The criterion of the length of time since graduation with the prior credential has been removed from this revised Model. Also, work experience is not required for admission to the programs.

Content will be integrated into the LPN-to-RN curriculum to orient the LPN student to the RN role. The New Jersey Council of Nursing Associate Degree programs has received a grant to develop a web-based LPN-to-RN bridge course in concert with the Diploma and LPN programs. The web bridge course will be offered through the New Jersey Virtual Community College and may help to facilitate the LPN-to-RN student's movement through the RN program.

The effectiveness of the LPN bridge course also will be evaluated by the Associate Degree Council in regard to the number of LPNs who: (1) register for the course, (2) complete the bridge course successfully, (3) obtain advanced placement in the second level of an RN program, (4) complete subsequent courses successfully, (5) pass NCLEX-RN on the first attempt, and (6) seek higher degrees.

There will not be a specific role course designed for the RN to BSN students, rather, the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the BSN prepared RN will be integrated throughout the upper division nursing courses.

Credit for general education courses will occur on a school-by-school basis using a variety of mechanisms, e.g., direct transfer, challenge examination, CLEP, non-credit to credit conversion, etc. for all courses that match the receiving program's curriculum, up to each school's maximum.

Because it is important for nurses to convey information clearly and concisely in writing and verbally, a writing/speech competency was a concept added to this revised Articulation Model. It is an area of deficiency often noted in post-high school students. In each area, LPN-to-RN and RN-to-BSN, writing and speech competency will be built into the programs through specific assignments included in each nursing course syllabus.

Evaluation of the Articulation Models

Some preliminary evaluation data of the original Model became available in 2000 when a task force of the NJSNA reported on their survey of Associate Degree and Diploma programs that followed the Model in its entirety for LPN articulation. The results indicated that there were eight New Jersey RN schools that followed the Model. Those



eight schools had 115 LPN-to-RN graduates in 1998 and all 115 graduates passed the NCLEX-RN on their first attempt. No formal evaluation was conducted of the RN-to-BSN programs. However, individual RN schools of nursing report that their graduates do not have a problem in New Jersey articulating with BSN programs.

The Fuld Leadership Council has developed specific outcomes for the measurement of the use of the revised New Jersey Articulation Model. Given that a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the revised Articulation Model will not be possible until 2006 for the LPN component and 2008 for the RN component, the New Jersey Collaborating Center for Nursing will assume responsibility for the evaluations.

The most important expected outcome of this project is the endorsement by a critical mass of state nursing schools. To encourage endorsement, only those schools that have agreed to endorse this Model are included in the marketing plan for the revised Articulation Model. As of 2002, all but one of the New Jersey nursing schools had endorsed the Model, thereby providing a solid base for evaluation.

It is anticipated that as a result of the state schools incorporating the revised Model into their curricula:

1. The percentage of RN-to-BSN graduates will increase by 5% annually above the current annual rate of 400/year by 1/1/08;
2. The percentage of LPN-to-RN graduates will increase each year by 10% above the current annual rate of 100 by 1/1/06;

3. The percentage of nurses who are culturally diverse will increase by 10% from the current 13% of RNs by 1/1/08 as a result of the increased number of LPNs entering the RN workforce;
4. Student success/satisfaction will be evaluated as follows:
 - a. Aide-to-LPN articulation component will be evaluated for feasibility of incorporation into the Model by 2004;
 - b. Student and administrator satisfaction with the revised Model will be evaluated through two surveys designed to address program satisfaction by 7/1/08;
 - c. The revised Articulation Model will be evaluated for possible updating by 7/1/06 for LPN articulation and 7/1/08 for BSN articulation; and
 - d. Outcome data of the success of LPN-to-RN students in programs where they are granted credit for two clinical courses will be compared to students' success in programs that only award credit for one nursing course by 7/1/06.

The revised Articulation Model is consistent with the assumptions of the New Jersey Colleagues in Caring. Articulation acknowledges the contributions of all members of the nursing workforce and directs efforts into developing a seamless educational infrastructure in New Jersey. Nursing, then, can become a major player in health care by acknowledging an integrated nursing practice system based on competency, experience, and education.



Table 1.

Articulation of the Practical Nurse to the Associate Degree or Diploma in Nursing LPN – RN

Concept	Implementation
Credits in Escrow	The LPN license is required for admission. All articulating students must meet program admission requirements. The student is granted credit for the first clinical nursing course based on passing NCLEX-PN. These nursing credits will be placed in escrow until the student successfully completes one semester of clinical nursing course work at the receiving institution.
Testing	Credit is granted for the first nursing course. Skills competency shall be supported through a non-punitive process that provides students with opportunities for learning and practice. At the discretion of the receiving institution, students may be granted credit for the second nursing course, take the second nursing course for credit, or be granted credit for the second nursing course after successful completion of any challenge examination(s) the program may require. Institutions may elect to offer workshops focused on helping the student prepare for the challenge examinations.
Time/Work Experience	No limits related to the length of time out of school or the amount of work experience are set.
Bridge Course	Orientation to the RN scope of practice may be offered through a separate course or incorporated into the associate degree/diploma curriculum.
General Education Courses	Credit for general education courses occurs on a school-by-school basis using a variety of mechanisms, e.g., direct transfer, challenge examination, CLEP, non-credit to credit conversion.
Writing/Speech Competencies	Writing and speech competencies are built into each associate degree/diploma program through course specific assignments that are identified in each nursing course syllabus.



Table 2.

Articulation of the Associate Degree or Diploma Registered Nurse to the Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing RN - BSN

Concept	Implementation
RN license required for matriculation	The RN license is required for matriculation. All articulating students must meet program admission requirements. Each program will determine the number of nursing credits that can be transferred. No more than 38 additional nursing credits may be required for BSN completion. Credits that are granted through non-traditional approaches such as portfolio evaluation or evaluation of work experience will be held in escrow until the student successfully completes one semester of clinical nursing course work at the receiving institution. Upon licensure by the Board of Nursing, international credits will be transferred according to institutional policy.
Testing	Testing is not required.
Time/Work Experience	No limits related to the length of time out of school or the amount of work experience are set.
Role of the BSN Graduate	Roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the BSN graduate are integrated into the baccalaureate curriculum.
General Education courses	General education credits are transferred on a school-by-school basis for all courses that match the receiving program's curriculum up to the stated maximum number of credits.
Writing/Speech Competencies	Writing and speech competencies are built into each program through course specific assignments that are identified in each nursing course syllabus.

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