

# Transition from RPN to RN

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## Introduction

Bridging is an academic pathway that expands the existing knowledge, skills, and experiences of the students. In Ontario, Canada the registered practical nurses (RPNs) who would like to become registered nurses (RNs) must take a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) degree via a certified RPN-to-RN bridging program. (College of Nurses of Ontario, 2025) Several studies have been conducted in relation to transitions from RPN to RN. Various findings have emanated from these studies. For instance, a systematic review study by Suva et al. (2015) found that RPN-to-RN bridging can be considered a situational transition. (Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, 2024) These transitions entail changes in position, functions, and responsibilities, and these are some of the changes that RPNs undergo in their progression to RNs via the bridging programs. (McCloskey et al., 2023) The paper reflects on the personal meaning of the RPN-to-RN transition using scholarly references.

## Summary

Transitional conditions uncover individual or community situations that enhance and limit successful transitions. (Connelly et al., 2023) Suva et al. (2015) state that the crucial RPN-to-RN transition conditions are time-based. They thus can be classified according to the desire to pursue the program, admission in the program, and adoption of the new RN responsibilities. On the other hand, the response patterns relate to the processes and outcomes characteristic of a certain transition. When this construct is applied to the RPN-to-RN transition experience, the process indicators define the successes encountered as one enters and progresses through the bridging program. Outcome indicators are the resulting measures of a fruitful transition obtained upon completing a bridging program. These include acquiring knowledge and skills, achieving professional goals, and obtaining RN licensing (Suva et.al, 2015).

According to research, the transition from RPN to RN is regarded as a situational transition which commonly describes educational and professional role transition and transitions that occur throughout the educational programs. Situational transitions entail changes in positions, functions, and responsibilities, and RPNs who pursue the bridging course to become RNs experience the changes. A study conducted by Linda et.al (2010) found that there are various challenges encountered by Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) as they take steps to enroll in transition option programs. The perception of many LPN students is that they execute the roles of RN in their current practice without an RN license. The process of changing this thinking paradigm with respect to the scope of practice in

relation to the RN and LPN comprises one of the main challenges encountered by such students.

Most LPN transition students prefer working full-time to maintain their earnings and benefits, including educational benefits. The LPN transition student is obliged to work full-time to fulfill his or her financial obligations due to changes in the nationwide economic climatic change. Most LPN students are single parents or primary supporters of their families. The students are forced to work for long hours, usually 36-40 hours per week, to pay for tuition fees and health insurance coverage (Linda et al., 2010). Other problems include experiencing difficulties with dosage calculation tests that must be completed at the onset of the semester. A study conducted by Jones et al. (2017) found that 1.4% of the LPN population underwent an LPN-to-RN transition. The transition rate remained relatively stable, ranging from 1.1-1.9% during the 13-year period the study was based on, although the LPN-to-RN transitions utilized a small portion of the total LPN population.

## Reflection

There are various meanings for the transition from RPN to BScN-prepared RN. The first implication I will get from the transition is increased payments. In most cases, RNs are more advanced in knowledge and receive much more payments than RPNs. The transition from RPN to RN requires one to pursue a 4-year nursing degree and must pass the national licensing examination for the individual to qualify for an RN position. Consequently, this transition implies I will gain more knowledge as I interact with my bridging course from RPN to RN.

There are various similarities between the transitions I am undergoing from RPN to RN and the one I underwent to RPN several years ago. These similarities include school workload, learning new knowledge, applying critical skills, and following the same delegation guidelines. The transition from RPN to RN will expose me to new knowledge similar to what happened several years ago. I will be required to apply critical thinking skills in my day-to-day operations, which drives the decision-making process and impacts the quality of care in both transitions.

The transition from RPN to RN is much different than the one I underwent through to RPN. Maturity is one of the differences because I was very young during my transition to RPN. Still, now I can show maturity in several aspects, such as age and execution of responsibilities, among others. My experience was limited several years ago as I was new to the nursing profession but now I have several years of experience. The school work is much more challenging than the one I was reading in the transformation to RPN; thus, this is another difference. The transition to RN also means more pay; hence, I will be able to boost my earnings. An RN has more responsibilities than RPN, which calls me to dedicate more time and be committed to executing them. Other differences come in the fact that in the RPN-to-RN transition, I will have good background knowledge, less trauma, increased scope of practice, and more opportunities compared to the RPN transition.

## Conclusion

Bridging is an academic pathway that expands the existing knowledge, skills, and experiences of the learners. RPN-to-RN transition conditions are time-based and can be categorized according to the desire to pursue the program, admission into the program, and adoption of the new RN responsibilities. Working for long hours, usually 36-40 hours per week to cater for tuition fees and health insurance coverage is one of the challenges faced by LPN students (Linda et.al, 2010). School workload, learning new knowledge, application of critical skills, and following the same delegation guidelines are some of the similarities I encountered between the RPN-to-RN transition and the transition to RPN, which took place several years ago. The differences manifest in maturity, increased school work, a good foundation of background knowledge, less trauma, increased scope of practice, and more opportunities.

## References

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