There are three basic steps to take in order to receive a nursing license:

1. Apply for licensure through a Board of Nursing.
2. Register and pay to take the NCLEX through PearsonVue.
3. Apply for a temporary practice permit (only if applicable).

Step 1: Apply for a Nursing License through the Board of Nursing

To apply for a nursing license, go to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing website, at https://www.ncsbn.org/contactbon.htm, and choose the state you plan to practice nursing in. Depending on the state, you may be able to apply directly online or download an application. However, some states require you to request an application via mail. **For most states, you can apply for licensure up to 90 days before you graduate and the application is good for up to one year.**

Once you obtain the application, read the instructions carefully and note the deadline for filing the application, fees to be paid, if an official transcript is needed, photograph, or verification from the school is required. If an official transcript with your degree posted is needed, then you can pick one up from the Office of the Registrar and not the School of Nursing.

If the application is to be completed by the School of Nursing for verification purposes, submit the signed and completed application or verification form to the Student Services Office, 239 Victoria Building, for processing. Once the application or form is processed, it will be mailed back to you, unless the directions state to send directly to the Board of Nursing. Check the application to make sure it is complete, make a copy for your records, pay the fee, and mail directly to the address provided on the application.

Remember, each state has its own fees, rules, and regulations regarding the application process.

Step 2: Register and pay to take the NCLEX through PearsonVue

After you apply for licensure, you must register to take the state board exam by registering for the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN®). **You can register to take the state board exam up to 90 days before you graduate.** To register for the NCLEX, go to the PearsonVue website at http://www.pearsonvue.com/nclex/. Make sure you pay the fee of $200; otherwise, you will not be eligible to take the test.
One you are deemed eligible by the Board of Nursing to take the test, you will receive “Authorization to test” (ATT) and can then schedule to take the state board test. Students can only register to take the state board for one state, but can take the actual exam anywhere. Students applying to take the NCLEX-RN exam outside of the United States will pay an extra fee.

Step 3: Apply for the Temporary Practice Permit

In some states you can apply for a temporary practice permit. A permit allows the graduate nurse to practice, but under the supervision of an experienced nurse. If you plan on applying for a temporary practice permit, then you must follow the steps required on the application.

Apply for the permit only if you plan to practice before taking the state boards. If you do not plan on practicing until after you receive your nursing license, then do not apply for the permit.

In addition, you are advised to know the hiring practice of the establishments you plan to practice in before applying for the permit. If the establishment will not hire unless you have a nursing license, then paying for a permit to practice with is worthless.

For more information on the licensure and NCLEX process, visit www.ncsbn.org or www.pearsonvue.com/nclex.