Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) includes the construct of self-efficacy. It guides the selection of variables, design and interpretation of findings. Important elements in workforce planning are linked to the self-efficacy of future registered nurses. Student nurse attrition is estimated to be 28% and approximately 68% of new graduates in Nova Scotia plan to leave their current employer. Health care systems need registered nurses who want to stay in the nursing workforce, who are resilient to its stressors and who are confident and productive as members and leaders of interdisciplinary health care teams.

**Purpose:** To develop and psychometrically assess a scale to measure senior baccalaureate nursing student self-efficacy related to meeting entry level competencies required on acceptance to the profession. Strong research evidence supports the value of self-efficacy in general education and employment; further investigation of self-efficacy building in nursing education is warranted. To do so, development of a valid and reliable measurement instrument was an important first step.

**Methodology:** A twenty-two item, Likert type measurement instrument entitled the Nursing Competence Self-Efficacy Scale (NCSES) was developed and validated by experts in nursing research and practice and in consultation with experts in instrument development and psychometric assessment. Nursing experts (n=8) participated in a validation process consisting of two independent reviews of the instrument. Student readers evaluated the draft 32 item NCSES for clarity and ease of interpretation before it was administered to senior baccalaureate nursing students (N=253). Analyses: content validity, face validity, validity from contrasting groups, convergent validity, factor analysis, reliability and test-retest reliability.

**Results:** Shapiro Wilk is 0.982; Skewness .541 .155; Kurtosis .459 .308. Contrasting group t-test statistic (p= <.001) rejects the null hypothesis between second year student scores and seniors. Sampling adequacy is supported by KMO .934; Bartlett’s test (p= <.001). Exploratory Factor Analysis suggests 22 items moderately or highly loaded by four interpretable factors reflecting student self-efficacy in specific domains. Cronbach’s alpha for 22 items was .919; for factors .789, .845, .783 and .753 respectively. Stability is supported by a positive correlation between administration on time one and two to paired groups of seniors on a test-retest reliability Pearson correlation coefficient of (r=.831).

**Conclusion:** The NCSES is the first scale developed to evaluate senior nursing students’ self-efficacy for comprehensive nursing practice. Initial psychometric assessment has estimated internal consistency reliability, test-retest stability reliability, content validity, construct validity and contrasting group validity. With further assessment the NCSES may provide a practical 22 item scale designed to evaluate senior baccalaureate nursing students’ self-efficacy for future nursing competence. A replication study is currently underway.