VIHA’s New Grad Transition Program 2009
Questions & Answers

Who is eligible for these temporary regular full-time opportunities?

VIHA is offering the New Grad Transition Program to all 2009 new BScN, prepared Registered Nurse graduates from the three nurse education programs on Vancouver Island. The program is also being offered to new RN and BScN graduates from off-island nursing programs and Registered Psychiatric Nurses seeking employment with VIHA. This program is not being offered to post-diploma BScN graduates.

What does temporary regular full-time for one year mean?

The new graduate is offered temporary regular full-time status with benefits. Should the new graduate not secure a regular position within 12-months, the graduate will convert to casual status. The new graduate will have accrued one-year of full-time seniority. The new graduate is strongly encouraged to apply to regular positions before the end of the one-year period if they do not wish to move to casual status. New grads can apply to positions in any clinical area that they are qualified to work - they are not confined to the area that they are hired to.

Will new graduates be offered positions where they live or will they have to go wherever the jobs are?

Opportunities are offered throughout VIHA and include rural and urban centers in a multitude of clinical settings where a new graduate would be eligible to work. VIHA is hopeful that each new grad will be placed in their desired clinical setting, but acknowledges that this might not always be possible.

Is the new graduate obliged to staying with VIHA if s/he participates in the program?

No, there is no obligation to stay with VIHA or in the original clinical setting that they are hired into. However, we hope that by supporting the new graduate and providing the Mentorship Program, the new graduate will feel welcomed by the organization and supported in his/her development, and have every reason to stay. Should a grad be considering leaving we encourage them to talk to their Manager and the Project Manager to discuss options.

I am interested in part-time employment. Does the program only offer full-time opportunities?

The program offers only full-time opportunities.
Is the new graduate position a supernumerary position?

For the first six-weeks or 225 hours during the Mentorship Program, the position is strictly supernumerary. This means that the position is above the baseline staffing for the unit.

Can the new grad remain in the supernumerary role for the entire one-year?

No, the intent is that the new graduate be available to meet the staffing needs of the unit after the completion of the mentorship period.

If the new graduate has not been successful for a permanent or a temporary vacancy at that time, or been assigned to a previously posted and unfilled vacancy, the new graduate will be given a full-time rotation that mirrors another full-time rotation on the unit. The role of the nurse with the same rotation is not the same as the role of the mentor. The nurse is a shift partner and may act as a mentor but has not been assigned as a formal mentor. The new graduate will provide relief coverage following the Deployment Guidelines.

If there are no relief needs on a given day, the new graduate will be an extra staff member on the unit or may be deployed to one other similar unit (previously agreed upon by the Manager and new graduate). The new graduate may use some of the 225 hours to orientate to the second unit.

The new graduate is encouraged to apply for temporary and permanent vacancies. If there are vacancies on the unit that have been posted and remain unfilled during the year, the Manager may move the new graduate into the vacant line. If the vacancy ends before the end of the one-year mark, the Manager will provide the new graduate a new full-time line mirroring an existing full-time line on the unit.

Following the mentorship period, if the new graduate is supernumerary and is not required on his/her identified second unit, and a third unit has a vacant shift, will a regular staff member on the unit be pulled to cover the shift on the third unit? And would the third unit call in someone at overtime first?

Our goal is to ensure that new graduates participating in the program consolidate their practice on a maximum of two units (unless otherwise agreed – for example, rural placements). In particular, third party units should continue to follow their past practice and the casual call in section of the collective agreement to replace absent staff and only seek (float) staff from units with new graduates participating in the program after calls to the casual staff have been exhausted.

Will the new graduate be expected to work in a float pool working on multiple similar type units?

No, the literature does not support new graduates working in float pools since this scenario does not support the new graduate to consolidate his/her practice in one area and gain confidence.
**Will the new graduate be expected to work in a rotation with straight night shifts or straight evening shifts?**

Our intent is to provide the new graduate a regular rotation that would provide a mix of shifts – day/night or day/evening and regular time-off. It is especially important that the rotation include day shifts where there are increased supports from the Manager or designate, clinical nurse educator and members of the interdisciplinary team.

**Is the new graduate replaced when they are sick or away for some reason?**

A new graduate will only be replaced following the mentorship program if they are filling a vacant position or relief shift on a unit.

**Is the new graduate eligible for sick leave and vacation accrual?**

Yes, the new graduate is provided regular status and the benefits provided to a regular position.

**Does the new graduate work on statutory holidays?**

The new graduate will follow a regular full-time rotation and as such will have opportunity to work on statutory holidays.

**Can the new graduate apply for an unpaid leave for some time off - a reasonable amount of time?**

Yes. We recognize that new graduates may need some time off during the year especially to prepare for their exams. Requests for leaves of absence are negotiated with the Manager. The new graduate will begin accruing vacation benefits upon hire.

**Can a new graduate accept overtime shifts during their time off?**

The employer is not obligated to offer overtime and we prefer that new graduates not be offered overtime until after their Mentorship Program. Should a Manager or designate be in a staffing situation whereby a decision is being contemplated to offer an overtime shift to the new graduate during the mentorship period, the Manager will consider the new graduate’s level of competence and ability to satisfactorily meet the Standards of Practice of Nursing in B.C. (which includes the Code of Ethics) in a novice role, and the new graduate accepting the shift should consider the same. As well, it is hoped that the assignment provided is consistent with the new graduate’s abilities and comfort level.

**As part of the New Grad Transition Program will I be eligible to receive the Qualification Differential for my BScN?**

Under the Nurses Collective Agreement all nurses working in a regular full-time or part-time position are eligible to receive the qualification differential ($1,200/yr or $100/month). If a nurse converts to casual status they will no longer be eligible for the qualification differential.
**Will all new permanent and temporary vacancies be posted internally?**

Yes. They will all be posted in the usual manner. Staff is encouraged to check the VIHA posting boards on a weekly basis to review newly posted vacancies.

**How many RN vacancies do you have now?**

Currently, there are a large number of vacant regular (permanent) and temporary full-time and part-time positions available throughout VIHA. The actual number varies from week to week.

**Can the new graduates apply for internally posted positions now?**

Once a new graduate has become a VIHA employee they are eligible to apply on internal postings. We strongly encourage new grads to apply for positions as they arise through the year (new postings go up every Wednesday and are posted for 15 days). New grads can apply to positions in any clinical area that they are qualified to work - they are not confined to the area that they are hired to.

Positions available within a specific union certification are posted on the BCNU posting boards within that certification. Positions that have gone unfilled within their own union certification can be found on the posting boards as “Authority Wide postings”. Many unfilled postings are placed on the VIHA web site at [www.viha.ca/careers](http://www.viha.ca/careers). Staff is encouraged to review these regularly. Currently there are unfilled regular and temporary positions available in a variety of clinical settings.

**Will the new graduates have preferential treatment over existing staff when applying for positions?**

New graduates will not receive preferential treatment. New vacancies are posted as they arise and all qualified applicants can apply (which includes new graduates). Managers follow the collective agreement when making selection decisions.

**If the new graduate is successful for a vacancy, when will they start in the position?**

The start date will be negotiated with the hiring Manager for anytime after the Mentorship Program.

**What is the impact to the regular full-time status of the new graduate if s/he bids and is successful for one of the following vacant positions?**

- **A temporary full-time position?** The regular full-time status is held up to the one-year mark.
- **A temporary part-time position?** If the new graduates wish, the hours will be topped to full-time for up to the one-year mark.
- **A permanent regular full time or part-time position?** The graduate gives up the full-time status in the program in exchange for a job that he/she permanently owns beyond the one-year mark.
**What happens to the new grad transition program position line when the new graduate leaves to take another position?**

Since the position was created only for the program, the line will remain vacant.

**Are there opportunities for specialty education?**

There are a variety of opportunities in specialty areas for new graduates to apply to including: Critical Care, Emergency, Neonatal Intensive Care, Pediatric Intensive Care, Perinatal, Perioperative (except RJH and VGH which offer their own program), and Renal. Specific information can be found at on the VIHA web site at Post Graduate Nursing Opportunities.

**What is the role of the Manager or designate in the New Grad Transition Program?**

The Manager or designate and the clinical educator support the learning and developmental needs of the new grad, by monitoring the new graduate’s progress and performance, and by offering additional support as required. They will identify a mentor for the new graduate. The Manager is responsible for organizing the clinical orientation.

The Manager will inform the staff on the unit of the program and make written materials available for them.

**For questions related to the New Grad Transition Program or the Mentorship Program, please contact your Manager or designate, BCNU Steward or:**

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