

Profile of a newly graduated registered nurse

Entry-level registered nurses (RNs) are recent graduates from a recognized nursing education program who are at the point of initial registration with BCCNM, i.e., during the first 12 months of practice. They accept responsibility and demonstrate accountability for their practice as members of the health care team.

Entry-level registered nurses are employed in diverse practice environments that range from large urban settings to remote rural settings and they may work in hospital, community, home, clinic, school, residential, and correctional facilities.

Entry-level registered nurses must attain the competencies required to practise safely, competently and ethically.

It is unrealistic to expect entry-level registered nurses to function at the level of practice of experienced registered nurses. Supportive practice environments that encourage entry-level registered nurses to feel welcome, safe, valued, respected and nurtured, ease RNs transition into practice and help support safe, ethical and quality health care.

Entry-level registered nurse preparation and practice assumptions

1. Requisite skills and abilities are required to attain entry-level RN competencies.
2. Entry-level RNs are prepared as generalists to enter into practice safely, competently and ethically:
 - In situations of health and illness
 - With people of all genders across the lifespan
 - With the following possible recipients of care: individuals, families, groups, communities and populations.
3. The practice setting of entry-level RNs can be any environment or circumstance where nursing is practised.
4. Entry-level RNs enter into practise with competencies that are transferable across diverse practice settings.
5. Entry-level RNs experience in practicing the competencies during their nursing education program can vary and may be limited in some practice environments and with some clients.
6. Entry-level RNs have a strong foundation in nursing theory, concepts and knowledge, health and sciences, humanities, research, and ethics.
7. Entry-level RNs are prepared to engage in interprofessional collaborative practice, essential for improvement in client health outcomes.

8. Entry-level RNs are beginning practitioners whose level of practice, autonomy, and proficiency will grow best through collaboration, mentoring, and support from registered nurse colleagues, managers, the health care team, and employers.

Entry-level registered nurse competencies

Safe, competent and ethical registered nursing practice requires the integration and performance of many **competencies** grouped within the following four categories:

- Professional Responsibility and Accountability; Self-Regulation
- Knowledge-Based Practice
- Client-Focused Provisions of Service
- Ethical Practice.

All registered nurses practise in a manner consistent with the **BCCNM Standards of Practice** as well as federal and provincial/territorial legislation and common law that directs practice.

Practice learning experiences expected during nursing education

Recognized nursing education programs are required to provide opportunities for students to apply the entry-level competencies for registered nurses in direct practice learning experiences. Nursing education programs and health care settings work in partnership to ensure that students have access to quality practice learning experiences.

Students are prepared as generalists and have direct practice learning experiences with clients across the lifespan and in a variety of acute care and community settings. Nursing education program reviews by BCCNM require evidence of generalist preparation of students and appropriate practice learning experiences for students to achieve entry-level competencies and Standards of Practice.

Supports needed by entry-level RNs

Research has shown that support within practice environments is critical to professional growth, the consolidation of practice, and retention of new graduates for entry-level registered nurses.

The support for quality practice environments can be achieved by:

- Providing initial experiences working in a practice setting that support entry-level RNs to consolidate their knowledge application and skills.
- Identifying and informing entry-level RNs of resources available

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to support the consolidation and development of their practice.

- Providing position-specific education and professional development through orientation, in-service education, and mentorship programs.
- Encouraging and supporting experienced RNs to mentor entry-level RNs.
- Providing opportunities to strengthen leadership skills through the integration of experiences, support, and mentoring
- Considering workload and staff scheduling that address the transitional needs of entry-level RNs.
- Identifying the competencies required in a particular setting, position and/or situation of added responsibility and providing opportunities for entry-level RNs to demonstrate their competencies before assuming these responsibilities.
- Providing clarity about responsibility and accountability, ongoing constructive feedback, and formal evaluation processes.
- Promoting an environment that encourages entry-level RNs to pose questions, engage in reflective practice, and request assistance without being criticized.

It is important for newly graduated RNs to gain confidence, experience, knowledge and skills in a workplace that values and supports their contribution to the health care team and successful health outcomes.

Creating quality practice environments is the shared responsibility of governments, employers, registered nurses, nursing regulatory bodies, professional organizations, and post-secondary education institutions.

To learn more, please visit the **Nursing Standards** section of the BCCNM website www.BCCNM.ca.

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