

Q: What are Employed Student Nurses (ESNs/ESPNs)?

A: ESNs are employed student nurses who are registered in a British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives recognized **registered nursing** education (BSN) programs and have successfully completed two or more years (including practicum placements).

ESPNs are employed student psychiatric nurses who are registered in a British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives recognized **registered psychiatric nursing** education programs and have successfully completed two or more years (including practicum placements).

Q: What is the difference between ESNs/ESPN and student nurses?

A: This table outlines the differences between ESNs and student nurses:

ESNs/ESPNs	Student Nurses
Employment is the primary goal.	Learning is the primary goal.
Responsible for providing nursing care to patients, supervised by an RN, RPN, or NP who is responsible for overall plan of care.	Responsible for their own practice and the preceptor is responsible for overall patient care.
Performance is evaluated the same way that other team members are evaluated.	Performance is evaluated by an instructor, with input from the preceptor and unit.

Q: Do the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM) and Island Health have policies around ESN/ESPN practice?

A: Island Health's guidelines are congruent with BCCNM's policy on Employed Student Registrants. To review this information, check out:

- Employed Student Registrants
(<https://www.bccnm.ca/NP/PracticeStandards/Pages/employedstudents.aspx>)
- Employed Student Registration
(https://www.bccnm.ca/RN/applications_registration/how_to_apply/ESR_RN/Pages/Default.aspx)
- Frequently Asked Questions
(<https://www.bccnm.ca/NP/learning/employedstudents/Pages/Default.aspx>)
- Regulatory Supervision of Nursing Student Activities
(<https://www.bccnm.ca/RN/PracticeStandards/Pages/employedstudents.aspx#footnotes>)

Q: What is Professional Practice's role?

A: Professional Practice is responsible for overall Employed Student Nurse (ESN/ESPN) program oversight and is a contact for any complex practice concerns.

Talent Acquisition and Employee Journey and Professional Practice work together to share information with applicants interested in ESN/ESPN positions.

Q: How are ESN/ESPN practice supports addressed?

A: As with other employees, the unit leadership team (i.e., Managers, Clinical Nurse Educators, Clinical Coordinators, and Clinical Nurse Leaders) play key roles in helping you develop your learning plan to address any identified ESN/ESPN practice supports required for your ongoing success.

As needed, additional supports such as Professional Practice, Human Resources, and professional regulatory colleges can be drawn upon for support and resources.

Q: Do ESNs/ESPNs need to renew their registration with BCCNM each year? If so, until when is the BCCNM Employed Student registration valid?

A: Yes, if you plan to work as an ESN/ESPN it is *mandatory* to have practising Employed Student registration with BCCNM and renew it annually. Typically, the Employed Student registration with BCCNM is valid until the last day of March.

Q: Who guides and directs ESNs/ESPNs practice during their shifts?

A: ESNs/ESPNs must always be scheduled supernumerary and have a supervising RN, RPN, or NP available to authorize the ESN/ESPN to perform skills/activities and to address immediate concerns or specific questions.

Q: What do managers and units need from ESNs/ESPNs?

A: It is essential that managers and units have regular contact with ESNs/ESPNs about scheduling, employment, and educational experience. ESNs/ESPNs should let their unit leader and Human Resources know if there are any changes in contact information.

Q: How is the ESN/ESPN schedule determined?

A: ESNs/ESPNs negotiate their hours of work with their unit leadership. ESN/ESPN shifts may be composed of days, evenings or nights, weekdays or weekends. ESNs/ESPNs should be supernumerary and ***not be scheduled for statutory holidays or overtime.***

During school breaks, unit needs are the first priority for scheduling. During full time school, ESNs/ESPNs should not be scheduled for night shifts; managers are encouraged to be flexible around school demands.

Q: How many hours can ESNs/ESPNs work, and who is responsible for tracking this?

A: ESNs/ESPNs are each allocated a minimum of 275 hours from program operational budget.. All orientation, hours of work and ongoing education activities are paid employment. Additional hours may be funded through the program operational budget at the discretion of the manager.

Q: How do I know if an ESN/ESPN can perform a skill or activity?

A: ESNs/ESPNs are responsible for articulating their competencies with skills/activities. Before a

skill/activity may be performed, the supervising RN, RPN, or NP must authorize the ESN/ESPN to carry out the skills/activities. Prior to authorizing an ESN/ESPN to complete the activity, the ESN/ESPN and supervising RN, RPN, or NP should review the [Island Health ESN Limits & Conditions](#) and [Island Health ESPN Limits & Conditions](#) document. Additionally, the unit or area can restrict ESNs/ESPNs from practising particular skills/activities and should communicate this restriction to the ESNs/ESPNs and employees on the unit.

Q: Can ESNs/ESPNs learn and apply new skills/activities as an ESN/ESPN?

A: No, ESNs/ESPNs do not learn new skills or activities while employed as an ESN/ESPN. The intent is for ESNs/ESPN to consolidate the skills/activities they have obtained competence within their educational program under the regulatory supervision of an RN, RPN, or NP.

Q: Can an ESN/ESPN take verbal orders or transcribe written provider orders?

A: No, ESNs/ESPNs cannot take verbal orders. Verbal orders are prone to errors and are only accepted in situations where there are no other reasonable alternatives and in the best interest of the patient to expedite ordering; Orders Management Policy 9.9

ESNs/ESPNs may transcribe written provider orders but they must have them checked *and* co-signed by the supervising RN, RPN, or NP.

Q: Can ESNs/ESPNs work on the same unit as they currently work (in a different role) or currently have a Consolidated Practice Experience (CPE)?

A: To avoid role confusion, ESNs/ESPNs should not hold ESN/ESPN positions on the same unit that they currently are employed (in a different role) or where they are currently having their CPE.

Q: Do ESNs/ESPNs accrue seniority?

A: The terms and conditions of this role are outlined by a Letter of Understanding signed between the employer (HEABC) and BCNU, and the Nursing Bargaining Association Collective Agreement. Seniority accrued as an ESN/ESPN will be recognized within their BCNU certification unit as an RN/RPN if the individual previously an ESN/ESPN obtains a permanent position within one year of graduation.

Q: Can ESNs/ESPNs take leaves of absence from school and continue to work in Island Health?

A: No, as the ESN/ESPN position is contingent on continued enrolment in a school of nursing program in good standing. If any student takes a leave of absence from school for *any* reason, they are not able or eligible to work as an ESN/ESPN until they are reinstated as an active student.