


Human Resource Manual

	Policy Name	Baccalaureate or Master's Degree with Nursing Major Hiring Policy
	Policy Number	HR 0428
	Date this Version Effective	December 2013
	Responsible for Content	Human Resource Division

I. Description

Describes advanced education requirements for direct care nurses hired or rehired after 1/6/2014 working at UNC Hospitals or in a UNC Hospitals-based clinic.

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II. Rationale

The 2010 Institute of Medicine report on the future of nursing recommends an increase in the number of baccalaureate prepared nurses to the level of 80 percent by 2020. This recommendation is based on evidence of a positive relationship between higher levels of education and clinical outcomes, anticipation that health care will continue to become increasingly complex, and a predicted shift of some services to community settings, necessitating the public health education included in the baccalaureate curriculum.

In order to reach these goals, we must begin hiring more baccalaureate prepared nurses and/or require nurses without a baccalaureate or higher degree in Nursing to work toward degree completion. This focus on academic progression will facilitate nurses moving forward with more education.

III. Policy

A. Application

Note: This policy does not apply to anyone who is currently employed or who is hired before 1/6/2014. This policy does not apply to nurses hired after 1/6/2014 who work only in UNC Faculty Physicians (School of Medicine) clinics.

All employees employed or re-employed on or after 1/6/2014, who hire or transfer into a direct care Registered Professional Nurse (RN) position at UNC Hospitals or in a UNC Hospitals-based clinic, will be required to attain a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, from an accredited program pursuant to the terms of this policy as a condition of continued employment. Nurses hired as Per diem/Flex/Casual/Staffing Response Team (SRT) are exempt from this requirement, until such time as they transfer into a regular, part time or full time benefit-eligible position.

For current employees who wish to voluntarily pursue a Baccalaureate or Master's degree with a major in Nursing from an accredited program, we will provide the same resources available to new hires, but attainment of the degree will not be a condition of continued employment. Time spent pursuing the degree requirement is non-compensable.

B. Requirements

New Hires On or After 1/6/2014

As a condition of employment, all employees employed or re-employed on or after 1/6/2014, who are hired into a direct care Registered Professional Nurse (RN) position at UNC Hospitals or in a UNC Hospitals-based clinic, and who do not have a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, will be required to:

- Enroll in an accredited Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, program within four years of his/her first day of employment as a regular employee at UNC Medical Center; and
- Complete a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, from an accredited program within seven years of his/her first day of employment as a regular employee at UNC Medical Center.

Failure to timely meet the requirements of this policy will result in termination without grievance rights, but will entitle the employee to a pre-disciplinary conference.

C. Employees Hired On or After 1/6/2014 Who Transfer or Promote

As a condition of employment, all employees employed or re-employed on or after 1/6/2014, who transfer or are promoted into a regular full or part time direct care Registered Professional Nurse (RN) position at UNC Hospitals or in a UNC Hospitals-based clinic, and who do not have a Baccalaureate or Master's degree with a major in Nursing will be required to:

- Enroll in an accredited Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing on a [prorated schedule](#).
- Complete a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing from an accredited program on a [prorated schedule](#).

D. Employees Hired On or After 1/6/2014 Who are Rehires

The Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or Master's degree with a major in Nursing, requirement for employees who terminate employment before receiving their degree will be [prorated](#) if they are re-hired at UNC Hospitals or in a UNC Hospitals-based clinic. For example:

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- If an employee resigns after 3 years and has not enrolled in a BSN/MSN program, upon re-hire, s/he will have one year to enroll in a degree program and 3 years to achieve his/her degree. If the employee resigns after 6 years, upon re-hire, s/he would have one year to achieve a BSN/MSN degree.
- If an employee is terminated after 4 years, because s/he has not enrolled in an accredited program per policy, s/he must show proof of enrollment in an accredited BSN/MSN program before s/he can be rehired. If the employee is terminated after 7 years, because s/he has not achieved a degree per policy, the applicant is ineligible for re-hire unless s/he has a BSN/MSN degree.

E. Per diem/Flex/Casual/Staffing Response Team (SRT)

Employees hired as Per diem/Flex/Casual/Staffing Response Team (SRT) are exempt from this hiring requirement, until such time as they transfer into a regular, part time or full time position at UNC Hospitals or in a UNC Hospitals-based clinic.

As a condition of employment, all employees hired as Per diem/Flex/Casual/Staffing Response Team (SRT) who transfer into a regular full or part time benefit-eligible direct care Registered Professional Nurse (RN) position at UNC Hospitals or in a UNC Hospitals-based clinic, and who do not have a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, will be required to:

- Enroll in an accredited Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, within four years of the initial transfer date into a regular part time or full time position.
- Complete a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, from an accredited program within seven years of the initial transfer date into a regular part time or full time position.

Should the employee transfer back to a Per diem/Flex/Casual/Staffing Response Team (SRT) position during the course of his/her employment, the deadlines for completion as outlined above do not change. In other words, the deadline clock keeps ticking once the initial transfer to a regular position occurs, regardless of the number of times employees transfer back and forth between regular part time/full time positions and Per diem/Flex/Casual/SRT positions.

F. Extensions

- In very limited circumstances, an RN may request an extension of no more than one year to complete these requirements when the nurse is able to demonstrate a significant and unexpected hardship in completing the requirement. A request for an extension must be requested in writing at least 8 weeks prior to the required date of enrollment or completion. A second one-year extension may be requested and considered.
- All extension requests will be reviewed by a three person committee consisting of the Vice President for Human Resources (or his/her designee), the Chief Nursing Officer (or his/her designee), and the organization's EEOC officer, and the decision of that committee to grant or deny the extension will be final.

G. Exceptions to the Bachelor or Master's Degree with Nursing Major Requirement

Exceptions to the Baccalaureate or Master's Degree with Nursing Major Hiring Policy include:

1. Nurses age 55+ who retire from UNC Hospitals, initiate their pension, and then are re-hired
2. Per diem, Flex, Casual, and Staffing Response Team (SRT) nurses

IV. Related Policies

- A. Administrative Work Flow for Recruitment & Hiring Processes
- B. Employee Orientation
- C. Recruitment
- D. Transfer

Table 1. Pro-Ration Schedule

Years Since Date of Hire/ Promotion or Transfer	Years to Enroll				Years to Obtain Degree			Total Years
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
0				X			X	7
1			X				X	6
2		X					X	5
3	X						X	4
4	Must show proof of enrollment						X	3
5						X		2
6					X			
7					Must have degree			0

V. Reviewed/Approved by

Nursing Clinical Directors, Nursing Policy Committee

VI. Original Policy Date and Revisions

Original December 2013

Revised December 2013

Appendix 1: Acknowledgement of Degree Requirement for UNC Medical Center

I acknowledge that I have received UNC Medical Center's Policy requiring a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, for all direct care Registered Professional Nurses (RNs) employed or re-employed on or after January 6, 2014. I understand and agree that my continued employment as a nurse at UNC Medical Center is conditioned on complying with the terms of this policy, including:

As a condition of employment, all employees employed or re-employed on or after 1/6/2014, who are hired into a direct care Registered Professional Nurse (RN) position, and who do not have a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, understand and agree to the following:

1. I must enroll in an accredited Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing, or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, program within four years of my first day of employment as a regular employee at UNC Medical Center; and
2. I must complete a Baccalaureate degree with a major in Nursing or a Master's degree with a major in Nursing, from an accredited program within seven years of my first day of employment as a regular employee at UNC Medical Center.

I understand that failure to meet these requirements will result in my termination from employment and I accept these requirements as a condition of my continued employment with the UNC Medical Center.

Signature

Print Name

Date

Date this Version Effective: December 2013