

February 21, 2025

Add Pay – Questions & Answers

What is Add Pay?

During negotiations to renew the 2019-2022 Provincial Collective Agreement, BCNU and HEABC agreed to add Year 15, Year 20, Year 25, and Year 30 Increment Steps to the Nurse Wage Schedule effective April 1, 2023.

However, during the ratification process, some nurses identified circumstances in which the Steps would not recognize certain nursing experience that would otherwise be unrecognized by existing seniority and service provisions.

To address this gap, the parties agreed to permanently replace the Year 15-30 Increment Steps with Year 15, 20, 25, and 30 “Add Pay”. Add Pay applies in addition to a nurse’s applicable Year 1-10 Increment Step effective April 1, 2023.

What is the purpose of Add Pay?

The parties’ shared goal in establishing both the Steps and Add Pay was to offer an incentive that would retain and recruit long-serving nurses to the BC healthcare system.

What was the process for applications?

On October 1, 2023, the one-time application process for Add Pay was opened. The timeline for applications was extended by agreement and applicants had until February 29, 2024 to apply for Add Pay.

Employers had until June 30, 2024 to assess applications and decide on eligibility.

What if a nurse did not agree with their Employer’s decision on eligibility?

Where nurses were denied Add Pay, or where nurses disputed their employer’s calculation of their Add Pay eligibility, they could apply to appeal the decision to the Registrar of BC Health Care Office of

Arbitration (BCHOA). The appeal submission period was closed on September 1, 2024 with reasonable exceptions. What was the Appeal Process with the Registrar of BCHOA

In total, over 400 appeals were filed to the Office of the Registrar.

Commencing in July 2024, the Registrar met with the BCNU and HEABC to develop a joint document sharing system for access to applications, supporting documents, and employer responses and to establish a process for the fair adjudication of the appeals.

Case management was held from August through December, 2024 to review all appeal applications. Where the Registrar required more information from the either the Nurse or the Employer, the Registrar requested this through BCNU and/or HEABC.

- 292 appeals were sent back to the Employer for further information/clarification
- 103 appeals were sent back to nurses to obtain more information on the basis of their appeal
- 27 appeals went back to both employer and nurse for further information.

Reasons some Appeals Were Not Successful:

For the most part, appeals were not successful based on the following reasons:

Stacking

Nurses listed multiple employers for the same time frame. This was called “stacking”. Nurses employed under the NBA are not allowed to “stack” or combine seniority accrued during the same time period of employment with seniority accrued at a non-NBA or NBA employer.

Gaps in Nursing Practice

Some nurses listed prior experience that included more than five (5) years of gap in practice. Where more than five (5) years has lapsed in a nurse’s practice, no credit is given for previous experience.

Where more than two (2) but less than five (5) years has lapsed in practice, previous experience is reduced by one increment for each year between two (2) and five (5) years.

Some appeals included consideration of whether time in excess of five (5) years in different roles (such as administrative or management role) still fell within nursing practice and should be counted.

Timeliness

Some applications were denied as they were filed out of time. The Registrar found that the process was sufficiently communicated and, further, additional time was provided to applicants through an extension

of the deadline from the original date set. In these circumstances, applicants who applied late were ineligible, unless they could demonstrate to the Registrar a bona fide reason (such as medical absence) for why they were unable to apply on time. Where the Registrar was satisfied a bona fide reason existed, relief was granted from the time limits and the application was considered on its merits.

Part-time hours

Another area where there was some confusion was related to part time work and how it should be calculated for Add Pay. In particular, should it be “year for year”, or pro-rated?

Article 52 and NBA seniority were the methods for assessing previous experience for Add Pay.

Once an employee is employed by their ultimate NBA employer, NBA regular part-time employees accrue seniority based on year for year of service, not pro-rated based on FTE.

However, the following applies when an employee is transferring between NBA employers:

- If an employee transferred between NBA employers, as per Article 51 Portability, within 180 days, their accrued seniority would reflect year for year of part-time employment at the NBA employer.
- However, if portability of seniority has expired (and portability of Add Pay), then Article 52 applies and all regular part-time employment experience is determined by FTE plus any casual hours worked at that employer at that point and is not calculated as per Article 13.01 (A) (i.e., year for year of service).

For transfer from non-NBA Employers:

- Non-NBA regular part-time experience is determined by FTE plus any casual hours worked at that employer to a maximum of 1950 or 1.0 FTE.

How were appeal decisions communicated?

All decisions were communicated by letter from the Registrar of the BCHOA and delivered by email. In addition to the Nurse who applied for an appeal, the Employer, HEABC and BCNU were sent a copy of the letter decision.

I don't agree with the Registrar's decision. Can I appeal again?

The Registrar's decisions are final and binding on the parties. There is no further appeal process under the Add Pay provisions.

What if there is a future issue – for example, what if the Employer does not implement 15 to 20 year Add Pay when I think I become eligible?

The work of the Registrar to resolve these issues is now concluded. For any future issues about your pay rate, you would address them in the normal course by speaking with human resources and/or seeking advice from your shop steward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Southern', written in a cursive style.

Lisa Southern
Registrar, BCHOA