

fact sheet

4

Becoming an enrolled nurse

Enrolled nurses are a skilled and vital part of the nursing team. They work with registered nurses to provide patients with essential nursing care. Enrolled nurses work with people of all backgrounds and ages in hospitals, aged care facilities, the community and other health care settings.

South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health is one of the most popular places to train to become an enrolled nurse and we conduct one of the largest programs in NSW with over 150 positions available every year.

Facts about the program

- You study for a Certificate IV in Nursing (Enrolled/Division 2 Nursing) which takes one year to complete. During this time you are employed in a hospital where you gain clinical experience and study at TAFE where you learn the practice and theory of nursing. You are paid a full time salary for both components of the course.
- The hospitals in South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health that employ you as a trainee enrolled nurse include: St Vincent's, St George, Sutherland, Prince of Wales Garrawarra Centre, Bulli, Coledale, David Berry, Kiama, Port Kembla, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven and Wollongong. A number of private facilities are also involved in our program.
- Trainee enrolled nurses are paid in accordance with the Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State) Award. The salary does not include shift allowances and varies depending on age and previous nursing experience. It increases every year for five years after finishing the course and some highly experienced enrolled nurses can earn even more than the fifth year rate.

- You'll work 38 hours per week of shift work. This includes day, evening and occasionally night duty shifts, with some weekends and public holidays. The leave entitlement is six weeks annual leave, usually paid on completion of the course.

At the end of the course

- There are plenty of positions available across the State in public or private hospitals, rehabilitation centres, nursing homes, agencies, community health, maternity hospitals, defence forces, centres for the physically and developmentally disabled, some diagnostic centres, hospices, and so on.
- There are opportunities for travel with mutual recognition of your qualifications across Australia and New Zealand.
- You can take on further post enrolment studies which are specially designed for enrolled nurses. You can advance to Special Grade Enrolled Nurse or you can consider becoming a registered nurse by studying the Bachelor of Nursing and you'll get credits for the qualification you have already completed.

Information about the next course, the entry requirements and how to apply can be found on the NSW Health web site:

www.nursing.nsw.gov.au

Alternatively, you can phone their enquiry line:
1800 330 933.

If you want to know more about the program in South Eastern Sydney Illawarra Health, email the Enrolled Nurse Program Coordinator:

Ten.Program@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au

A day in the life of Pat

I'm Pat. I am a trainee enrolled nurse and I have almost finished my training. When I've finished my training I'll be called an endorsed enrolled nurse which means that I will work as a second level nurse under the direction and supervision of a registered nurse. I've lots of choices ahead of me. I'm not sure if I want to work in with children or elderly people, in a hospital or as a community nurse. Maybe I'll try a few things.

Today I am part of a nursing team in a surgical ward that provides care for people around the clock...24 hours per day, seven days per week. I'm on a morning shift starting at 7am and will be working with the registered nurse caring for a number of patients. Because I'm just learning how to be a nurse I have restrictions on my practice and the registered nurse will closely supervise a lot of my work, but she has her own work to do, so I have to be able to prioritise and plan my day according to the needs of the patients and the routines of the ward. I'll be putting a lot of the things I learned at TAFE into practice.

I know I'll have a busy day today as we have lots of people going to theatre for operations and I will need to follow special instructions to help prepare them for that. As well as this we have patients who are recovering from operations. As I plan my day I have to think of lots of things, wounds need to be dressed, patients need to be fed and bathed, medications are to be given, patients are to be monitored for temperature pulse and blood pressure, post operative pain needs to be managed and reports need to be written. I need to know when to report important things to the registered nurse and how to support my patients and their families during their hospital stay. I'm going to be tired at the end of my shift but I love my work.

A day in the life of Amari

My name's Amari and I've just finished my TEN course and have started work as an endorsed enrolled nurse in a medical ward. It's 10pm on Saturday and I'm giving a report to the night staff who have just started their shift. They will work through the night until about 7am. I'm going on nights next week for the first time after my days off on Monday and Tuesday. I wonder how I'll manage to get to sleep during the day.

Tonight I've cared for five patients, that doesn't sound like many but I've been very busy, one of them is a diabetic whose blood sugars are unstable, I had to measure her blood sugars regularly and report any changes to the registered nurse. There's another lady in the same room who was very sick due to a heart problem. She had an oxygen mask on and I had to make sure that she was OK by recording her pulse and blood pressure and checking her oxygen levels with a special machine. She was too sick to help herself so I had to make sure that she had everything she needed including cutting up her meals and taking her a pan when she needed to pass urine. I discussed her care needs throughout the shift with the registered nurse who is my team leader.

All of my patients required tablets to be given at particular times and one man has an intravenous drip for antibiotics. I had to make sure that all the medications were given to the right patients and on time. At the beginning of my shift I had a patient who went home which was good news for him. I had to make sure that he had everything he needed for home and helped the registered nurse to organise his appointments and tablets.

Not long after that we had a phone call from the emergency department to say that there was a patient who needed to be admitted to hospital, so the bed was not empty for long. While the registered nurse was admitting the new patient in to the ward I spent some time with his daughter who was very upset and needed comforting. I couldn't answer all of her questions but she said she felt much better after talking to me. The registered nurse and I wrote up a care plan for the new patient and wrote a report on each of the patients in our care.

All of my friends are at a party tonight but I think I'll go home to bed, I don't mind as I have had a good shift and feel like I've done a good job tonight.