



# Neonatal Education and Specialty Training (NEST)

## PROGRAM SYLLABUS

Adapted from the Regional Perinatal Education Program  
Modified by Paula Tommasini, Neonatal Regional Knowledge Coordinator, Updated May 2023

We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate, and work together. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Program Description:.....   | 3  |
| Program Objectives:.....  | 4  |
| Program Delivery:.....  | 4  |
| Program Content.....  | 6  |
| Student Role and Responsibility:.....                               | 6  |
| Progress Assessment and Evaluation:.....                            | 7  |
| Formative Evaluation/Feedback:.....                                 | 8  |
| Learning Goals.....   | 8  |
| Attendance:.....  | 8  |
| Confidentiality:.....   | 8  |
| Students' Conduct:.....   | 9  |
| Student Resources.....  | 9  |
| Required Texts:.....  | 9  |
| Overview of Electronic Platforms and Resources Available:.....      | 9  |
| Detailed Course Outline:.....                                       | 10 |
| AWHONN Online Modules (NOEP) – Self-directed online study.....      | 10 |
| Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP).....                           | 11 |
| Acute Care of at-Risk Newborns (ACoRN).....                         | 11 |
| UBC Modules.....  | 11 |
| SafeCare Level 1.....   | 12 |
| Step 2 Breastfeeding Essentials Course.....                         | 12 |
| Responsibilities – Student, Clinical Instructor, and Preceptor..... | 13 |
| Student.....  | 13 |
| Preceptor.....  | 13 |
| Neonatal Regional Knowledge Coordinator (RKC).....                  | 14 |
| Hours:.....   | 15 |

## Program Description:

The Interior Health Regional Neonatal Education and Specialty Training (NEST) program uses a standardized, evidence informed on-line curriculum offered by the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurse (AWHONN) and Acute Care of at-Risk Newborn (ACoRN) program. The AWHONN and ACoRN programs are used throughout North America and Canada. ACoRN is used throughout Interior Health as a standardized education, teamwork and risk management program in the stabilization of neonates. NEST combines AWHONN modules and ACoRN with a skills lab and clinical preceptorship to help prepare nurses to provide safe and competent neonatal nursing care in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) and perinatal units/nurseries responsible for the stabilization and care of unwell infants. This will be accomplished by:

- Introducing the basic topics, concepts and practice guidelines that are fundamental to neonatal nursing
- Developing the specialized skills, knowledge, attitudes and judgement required to provide safe, competent and individualized care to the neonatal patient and their family
- Promoting professionalism in neonatal nursing

NEST is open to Registered Nurses interested in neonatal nursing practice and requires manager approval. The course offers education for the full spectrum of neonatal care including resuscitation and stabilization, care of the late preterm, breastfeeding, respiratory treatments, parenteral therapy, and more. This program will provide the detailed education required to practice in the neonatal intensive care unit.

The course provides a condensed format consisting of online modules, in-person skills/simulations, and clinical practice experience in larger volume neonatal site(s). Given this is a condensed format, a full time commitment is required to complete all in-person skill days, and clinical experience. If you are falling behind on modules or course schedule, please let your educator know early and a collaborative learning plan can be established and support provided. We want to ensure your success in the program and we will support you and your learning needs.

## Program Objectives:

At the completion of NEST, the neonatal nurse learner is expected to achieve the following competencies, **at the novice level:**

1. Demonstrate the ability to practice professionally in the neonatal practice setting;
2. Demonstrate the ability to provide safe and appropriate evidence-informed patient care;
3. Demonstrate the ability to provide supportive care to patients and their families;
4. Demonstrate the ability to function as a supportive and collaborative multidisciplinary team member;
5. Demonstrate the ability to safely and competently recognize and respond to urgent and emergent situations in the neonatal practice environment;
6. Demonstrate the ability to competently manage resources in the neonatal nursing practice environment.

## Program Delivery:

NEST utilizes a blended learning model. The experience consists of Neonatal Regional Knowledge Coordinator facilitated theory, skills and simulation labs, as well as a preceptor-led practicum.

Prior to attending skills week one, students will complete:

- The AWHONN modules in a maximum of twelve weeks via an on-line distance format
- The Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) (online exam & in person workshop).
- The ACoRN theory (online modules/exam - 8 hour additional simulation workshop to be delivered dependent on course availability).
- UBC learning modules on Kangaroo Care and Perinatal Substance Use

Additional requirements for RN students without a perinatal background:

- a minimum of 4 x 11 hour shifts in perinatal care, focusing on the maternal infant dyad and well newborn

Students are also to complete:

- Step 2 breastfeeding course (completed by end date of program)
- SafeCare Level 1 Learning Hub modules (completed by end date of program)
- Attend two weeks of the classroom skills/simulation (SIM) lab at a designated IH site.
- Participate in a preceptor-led preceptorship at a designated IH site.
- KGH and RIH students: complete preceptorship at quaternary neonatal care site outside of IHA

The Neonatal Regional Knowledge Coordinator will lead the classroom skills/SIM weeks.

The program is divided into 3 parts:

| 1. Distance Theory Learning – Prerequisites   | 2. Skills Weeks  | 3. Preceptor-Led Practicum   |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student responsible to complete AWHONN modules, ACoRN theory, and UBC on-line modules and required readings at their own pace within an 12-week period prior to attending skill week one – <b>unpaid studytime</b></li> <li>Students responsible to complete NRP requirements prior to attending skills week #1</li> </ul> <p>* Step 2 Breastfeeding Course and SafeCare Level 1 to be completed by last week of preceptorship and send certificates to <a href="mailto:specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca">specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca</a></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 week (37.5-hr) skills/SIM lab prior to preceptorship;</li> <li>1 week (37.5-hr) skills/SIM lab near the end of preceptorship.</li> </ul> <p><b>Prerequisite for participation in skills/SIM lab is:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of the AWHONN modules theory with 80% or higher;</li> <li>Completion of NRP, ACoRN theory, and UBC modules and send proof/certificates to <a href="mailto:specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca">specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 X 11 hour shifts at IH designated NICU site; <i>additional 4 x 11 hour shifts in perinatal area if no perinatal background</i></li> <li>KGH/RIH: 4 X 11 hour high acuity shifts at quaternary NICU site outside of IH; Other sites: additional 4 X 11 hour high acuity shifts at IH NICU designated site</li> <li>Prerequisite is completion of skill/SIM week one.</li> </ul> |

## Program Content:

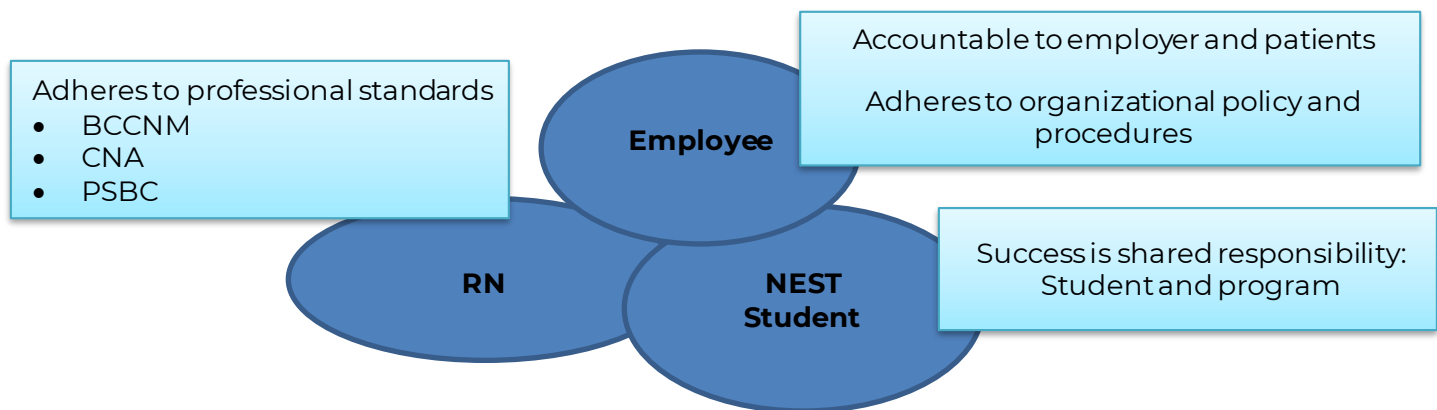
The program content is generic and applicable to neonatal nursing specialty in any facility or location. Course content includes knowledge and skills required to provide care to patients in the NICU, or other area that stabilizes and cares for the unwell neonate. The student will gain a comprehensive understanding of the basic topics, concepts and practices fundamental to neonatal specialty nursing. These concepts/topics include but are not limited to:

- Professionalism
- Teamwork, collaboration, communication, and documentation
- Role of the neonatal nurse and interdisciplinary team
- Safe use of neonatal equipment
- Role of the neonatal nurse in an emergency/resuscitative situation
- Knowledge and evidence based practice to care for the neonate that is at risk or unwell
- Delivery of family-centered care
- Breastfeeding/breastmilk, with particular emphasis on impact to the unwell neonate
- Stabilization prior to transport to a higher level of care
- Introduction to trauma sensitive practice, harm reduction, and indigenous cultural safety, relating to the caregiver/newborn dyad and family

## Student Role and Responsibility:

Students are expected to engage in and complete preparatory activities outside of clinical to successfully complete the program requirements. The required readings assigned to the online modules are each student's responsibility to complete.

A learner is responsible to the employer, the program, and the profession:



## Progress Assessment and Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated for neonatal competency, at the novice level, based on:

| Component                      |   | Criteria  | Completed ✓ |
|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------|
| <b>Theory</b>                  | AWHONN Modules<br>(may include perinatal modules)         | Passing mark of 80% or higher   |             |
|                                | NRP   | Successful completion of NRP course   |             |
|                                | ACoRN   | ACoRN pre-reading, modules/pretest complete (dependent on course availability) and participation in classroom/simulation components |             |
|                                | UBC Modules:<br>Kangaroo Care and Perinatal Substance Use | Completed and certificates submitted  |             |
| <b>Skills/SIM Lab</b>          | Skills Lab Week 1 & 2                                     | Attend both skills weeks  |             |
| <b>Preceptor Led Practicum</b> | Preceptorship Log   | Completed log, weekly reflections, feedback and goals<br>- Reviewed with preceptor and RKC during weekly debriefs                   |             |
|                                | Assignment  | Submitted on time, achieved minimum 80%   |             |
|                                | SafeCare  | Completed and certificate submitted by last week of practicum   |             |
|                                | Step 2 Breastfeeding Essentials                           | Completed and certificate submitted by last week of practicum   |             |
|                                | Nursing Practice Evaluation                               | Self-assessment completed by student and reviewed with preceptor/instructor at:<br>- Midterm evaluation<br>- Final evaluation       |             |
|                                | Practicum Hours   | All required practicum hours completed  |             |
|                                | Final Checklist   | Completed and signed by the RKC   |             |

## Formative Evaluation/Feedback:

The purpose of formative evaluation is to make adjustments to the learning process, as needed, with the goal of improving student achievement. (Bastable, 2003). This process includes:

1. Development of and focus on learning goal(s).
2. Evaluation of where student is in relation of goal(s).
3. Taking action to move closer to the goal(s).

Along with being provided feedback on their learning, students will be required to seek out effective feedback from peers, or members of the interdisciplinary team. It is important to document feedback so that it can be used in the formative learning cycle: Feedback received and sought out will assist in making goals, evaluating goals, and taking action to move toward reaching the goals.

## Learning Goals:

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they have an understanding of and a bility to create SMART learning goals. These goals will be an important aspect of nursing practice preparation, as they require self-reflection and self-evaluation of nursing practice. The link provided (College of Nurses of Ontario, 2017) below will provide assistance in the creation of SMART goals <https://www.cno.org/en/myqa/qa-resources/>

- [IH Professional Development Goal Plan](#)

## Attendance:

Success in the program is dependent on the student understanding the content, and being able to practice the application of this new knowledge. It is mandatory that students attend both week 1 and 2 in-person skills weeks and required preceptorship experience.

Students will be unable to take vacation during the SIM weeks, and it is highly recommended to not take vacation during the practicum. If absence is unavoidable, the student is required to arrange dates to make up their time with the Speciality Education Administrator, Manager, and Preceptor, and inform the Regional Knowledge Coordinator.

## Confidentiality:

Students are responsible for preserving a person's right to privacy and confidentiality in both the concrete and virtual worlds, including face to face meetings, phone calls, texts, emails, and all aspects of social media. The right to privacy and confidentiality includes information and/or images of patients, other students, hospital employees, educators and health authority personnel.



## Students' Conduct:

Student's conduct will be congruent with nursing standards, code of ethics, and applicable IH policies including but not limited to:

- Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses and Licenced Practical Nurses (Canadian Nurses Association [C.N.A])  
[Ethics - Canadian Nurses Association \(cna-aiic.ca\)](http://ethics.cna-aiic.ca)
- British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals (BCCNP), Professional Standards for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners (2018)  
[Home \(bccnm.ca\)](http://bccnm.ca)
- Interior Health Workplace Environment Policy (AU1000)  
<http://insidenet.interiorhealth.ca/infoResources/policies/Documents/Workplace%20Environment.pdf>
- Interior Health Practice Standard and Procedure: Dress code.  
<http://insidenet.interiorhealth.ca/infoResources/policies/Documents/Dress%20Code%20Personal%20Appearance.pdf>

## Student Resources:

- [AWOHNN modules](#)
- ACoRN textbook
- [Hospital specific policy/procedures](#)
- Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) textbook available through [the IH library](#)
- [Canadian Pediatric Society \(CPS\)](#)
- UBC Continuing Professional Development eLearning ([UBCCPD](#))
- [PHSA- Learning Hub](#)
- Perinatal Services BC ([PSBC](#))

## Required Texts:

- Boulton, J., Coughlin, K., O'Flaherty, D., & Solimano, A. (2021). *ACoRN: Acute Care of at-Risk Newborns* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Oxford
- Aylward, D. and Coughlin, K. (2021). *ACoRN: Acute Care of at-Risk Newborns: The Essential Guide* (2021). Ottawa, ON: Canadian Pediatric Society. (Provided in classroom week 1)

## Overview of Electronic Platforms and Resources Available:

| Online Resources  | NEST TeamSite  |
|---|--|
| AWHONN modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration email with link and instructions will be sent to all students by Neonatal Regional Knowledge Coordinator (RKC) or Leader               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online access</li> </ul> </li> </ul> UBC modules<br>Step 2 Breastfeeding course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration with link and instructions will be sent to all students by RKC or Leader</li> </ul> SafeCare | Access to Program Documents and Resources for duration of NEST program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Syllabus</li> <li>• Preceptorship Manual</li> <li>• Evaluation Documents               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Preceptorship log</li> <li>○ Nursing Practice Evaluation</li> <li>○ Preceptorship Learning Style document</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Professional Development Goal Plan</li> <li>• Link to AWHONN</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to ACoRN</li> <li>• Link to Step 2 Breastfeeding course</li> <li>• Link to SafeCare and UBC modules</li> <li>• Site policies/procedures</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Detailed Course Outline:

### AWHONN Online Modules (NOEP) – Self-directed online study

Use unique coupon code and instructions sent to your email for access.

**\*\*All modules must be completed prior to the first day of week 1 in-person skills week\*\***

**Send all certificates to [specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca)**

| Module # | Module Name – NOEP4                                  | Hours        |
|----------|--|--------------|
| 1        | Families in Crisis                                   | 2.25         |
| 2        | Transition to Extrauterine Life                      | 3.25         |
| 3        | Physical Assessment                                  | 3.5          |
| 4        | The Respiratory System                               | 4.75         |
| 5        | The Cardiovascular System                            | 3.0          |
| 6        | The Gastrointestinal System                          | 2.0          |
| 7        | Metabolic and Nutritional Support                    | 2.0          |
| 8        | Renal and Endocrine Disorders                        | 2.25         |
| 9        | Hematology and Immunology                            | 3.25         |
| 10       | The Neurologic System                                | 1.75         |
| 11       | Issues Affecting the Late Preterm Infant             | 1.75         |
| 12       | Newborn Skin and Skin Care                           | 1.75         |
| 13       | Lactation Support in the NICU                        | 2.5          |
| 14       | Neonatal Procedures                                  | 2.75         |
| 15       | Developmental Care and Management of Pain and Stress | 2.25         |
| 16       | Genetic Disorders and Congenital Anomalies           | 2.25         |
|          | <b>Total Nursing Contact Hours</b>                   | <b>41.25</b> |

## Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)

- Register for a NRP course on [iLearn](#) **Course ID#643**.
- NRP textbook can be obtained through the library and must be thoroughly reviewed and online test complete prior to attending class

## Acute Care of at-Risk Newborns (ACoRN)

Each student will be given access to the text and Essential Guide (provided during the first week of classroom).

The ACoRN algorithms are the core components of a standard approach to neonatal stabilization, and used as reference for IH perinatal practice throughout the in-person days, skills, simulations, and clinical experience. It is expected that students will achieve a basic understanding of the ACoRN process through theory, enriched through simulation during the skills and simulation days, and utilized as applicable in the clinical setting.

### **ACoRN Chapters** (pre-read and complete the pretest if attending workshop)

1. Transition
2. The ACoRN process
3. Respiratory
4. Cardiovascular
5. Neurology
6. Surgical Conditions
7. Fluid and Glucose
8. Jaundice
9. Thermoregulation
10. Infection
11. Transport
12. Support
- Appendix A: Procedures
- Appendix B: Interpretations of Investigations
- Appendix C: Medications

\* Workshop date will be provided by RKC, as available

\*\*ACoRN material will also be referenced throughout the classroom/simulation weeks

## UBC Modules

- Sign up through UBC Continuing Professional Development for an account
- Search for “Kangaroo Care” modules and complete, obtain certificate prior to week 1 classroom/simulation
- Search for “Perinatal Substance Use” modules and complete, obtain certificate prior to week 1 classroom/simulation

## SafeCare Level 1

- Sign up through Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) Learning Hub for an account
- Search "SafeCare Level 1"
- 12 hour course (learn at your own pace)
- 4 modules (plus intro) directly relating to perinatal/neonatal care:
  1. Trauma and Violence-Informed Practice
  2. Substance Use and Harm Reduction
  3. Indigenous Cultural Safety
  4. Conclusion and Scenario-based assessment
- Complete all modules and obtain certificate prior to end of practicum

## Step 2 Breastfeeding Essentials Course

- Course link will be emailed to students by Step 2 Education International once names are provided by RKC
- Breastfeeding Essentials is a 22- hour online course for frontline staff who are caring for families during pregnancy, birthing, and for the duration of breastfeeding. Participants will learn how to apply each of the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (learn at your own pace)
- Complete all modules and obtain certificate prior to end of practicum

### Breastfeeding Essentials modules

1. Why Breastfeed?
2. Protection of breastfeeding
3. Communications
4. Prenatal Education
5. Birth
6. Breastfeeding the Infant
7. Special Needs and Challenges
8. Maternal Challenges
9. Transition to Community
10. Wrap up

## Responsibilities – Student, Clinical Instructor, and Preceptor

### Student

- Complete the pre-requisites of NRP prior to in-person education (required). If unable to attend a course, contact specialty education at [specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca) or your RKC
- Complete all AWHONN online modules. This must be completed prior to day 1 of the in-person skills week, including post-tests to 80% passing grade and send the completion certificates to [specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca)
- Complete UBC modules and send the completion certificates to [specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca) prior to day 1 of in-person skills week.
- Complete any assigned ACoRN or other pre-readings as assigned by Neonatal RKC.
- Attend all in-person skills weeks and preceptorship hours. If unforeseen absence occurs, report absence to Neonatal RKC and manager. Alternative learning activities or learning plan adjustment will be considered when possible.
- Communicate with Neonatal RKC if any challenges or concerns are experienced with the content, program, or schedule.
- Utilize and complete self-assessment with Nursing Practice Evaluation during preceptorship experience.
- Utilize and complete the Preceptorship Log and attend weekly debriefs whenever possible.
- Complete Neonatal Teaching assignment.
- Complete SafeCare Level 1 and Step 2 Breastfeeding Essentials Course by completion of program and send completion certificates to [specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:specialtyeducation@interiorhealth.ca)
- Communicate learning needs with preceptor and Neonatal RKC, as well as NICU Educator.
- Review Nursing Practice Evaluation and Preceptorship Log with preceptor and Neonatal RKC at midterm and end of clinical experience/preceptorship.

### Preceptor

- Orient the student to the clinical area and expectations of nursing care standards.
- Review learning style document.
- Supervise student performance and assist the student in clinical activities.
- Assist the student in feeling comfortable on the ward as a valued member of the nursing team.
- Assist the student in integrating theoretical knowledge into realistic nursing situations and appropriate nursing action. Provide ongoing constructive feedback.
- Involve others, including colleagues and nursing administrators as resources for problem solving, support and guidance.
- Provide regular feedback about student's progress to the student and the Neonatal RKC.
- Review Nursing Practice Evaluation and Preceptorship Log with student at midterm and end of preceptorship.
- For additional resources, preceptor education, and teaching/learning tips, check out the [Preceptor Community of Practice](#).

## Neonatal Regional Knowledge Coordinator (RKC)

- Send welcome letter including how to access AWHONN modules.
- Send ACoRN Workshop date and Skills Weeks schedules to student.
- Be available to the student and preceptor during the clinical practicum.
- Meet or teleconference with the student as requested.
- Work with the student to create clear and achievable learning objectives.
- Work together with preceptor and student to determine progress in the course.
- At the midterm and end of the preceptorship, discuss the learning objectives, student growth, and preceptor experiences.
- Review Nursing Practice Evaluation and Preceptorship Log with preceptor and student at midterm and end of preceptorship.
- Support and facilitate communication in the event of challenging situations that may arise during the preceptorship.
- Act as a resource for both the preceptor and the student.
- Submit the Student Final Evaluation Checklist.
- Determine completion of course and present final certificate to the student.

## Hours:

**\*\*NOTE:** Learning is variable for each student and may require increased or decreased study time dependent on previous experience and learning needs.

| Component   | Hours   | Total  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Required Theory</b>  |   |  |
| AWHONN: Neonatal Orientation and Education Program (NOEP) Online Modules<br><i>*unpaid</i>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>41.25**</li> </ul>   | 93.25 est.                                       |
| Acute Care of at-Risk Newborns (ACoRN)<br><i>*unpaid online content/exam hours</i>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-reading time is dependent on individual learners</li> <li>7.5 hours instructor led ACoRN Workshop (<i>optional learning, timing dependent on course availability</i>)</li> </ul> |  |
| NRP<br><i>*unpaid online content/exam hours</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-line content and exam hours are dependant on individual learning needs.</li> <li>7.5 hours instructor led course for NRP.</li> </ul>  |  |
| UBC courses Strengthening Kangaroo Care and Perinatal Substance Use <i>*unpaid</i>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 hour* est. for Strengthening Kangaroo Care</li> <li>6 hours* est. for Perinatal Substance Use</li> </ul>   |  |
| SafeCare Level 1<br><i>*unpaid</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 hours of self-paced online content (<i>to be completed by end of program</i>)</li> </ul>   |  |
| Step 2 Breastfeeding Essentials<br><i>*unpaid</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 hours est. of self-paced online content (<i>to be completed by end of program</i>)</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Clinical Hours</b>   |   |  |
| In-person skills and simulations  | 10 days X 7.5 hours = 75 hours  | Perinatal trained: 339<br><br>Non-perinatal: 383 |
| Clinical practice preceptorship   | 20 shifts X 11 hours = 220 hours (additional 4 shifts X 11 hours if non-perinatal trained)  |  |
| High acuity clinical shifts<br><i>KGH/RIH learners to complete at a quaternary site outside of IH</i> | 4 shifts X 11 hours = 44 hours  |  |
| <b>Total program hours (not reflective of paid time):</b>   |   | <b>432.25 – 476.25</b>                           |

**\*\*Hours to complete theory is an average estimate and may take longer to complete for some learners. Access to on-line modules is purchased by the Professional Practice Office – time to complete theory/study are unpaid hours as employee investment in their education.**