



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Facilities clerical benchmark series review completed

Labour arbitrator Vince Ready issues final decision on January 20

After three years of extensive consultations with HEU members, meetings with the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC), and mediation with labour arbitrator Vince Ready, the Facilities Bargaining Association has finally concluded the “page 208” clerical benchmark series review negotiated in 2006 bargaining.

The \$3-million dollar review has resulted in several positive changes to benchmark language, and provides financial compensation for several groups.

Ready issued his final award on January 20 after an arbitration a week earlier had failed to resolve outstanding issues and secure an implementation agreement.

Background

HEU's clerical job family is comprised of 85 benchmarks in 10 different class series, many of which have been in place since 1987. Recognizing the need to evaluate these outdated benchmarks, the FBA negotiated a clerical benchmark review in the 2006-2010 collective agreement.

Through the review process, many benchmarks were revised. Some were to bring the benchmark language up-to-date to accurately reflect the work currently being performed, while others had significant changes that resulted in wage rate increases.

Any revisions to the benchmarks, as well as wage grids, had to be mutually agreed upon by the joint employer/union benchmark review committee representatives.

With a limited fund of three-million dollars (negotiated in the 2006-2010 facilities contract) to examine clerical jobs, which covers thousands of members, the benchmark review committee had significant challenges.

Benchmarks upgraded with wage increases

Some of the Finance and Payroll benchmarks were upgraded with either an accounting or payroll course, and were given a one grid lift to their wage rate. Current employees in these jobs will be deemed as having an equivalency to either of these courses respectively, and will not be required to take them.

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Those benchmarks include: Clerk IV (Payroll), Clerk IV (Accounts Receivable), Clerk V (Accounts Receivable, Patient Billing), Clerk V (Accounts Payable), Clerk V (Accounting), and Payroll Supervisor I, II and III.

Finance and payroll benchmarks

Benchmark	Job Title	Wage Grid	New Wage Grid
10205	Clerk IV, Accounts Receivable	16	17
10206	Clerk IV, Accounts Payable	16	17
10209	Clerk V, Accounts Receivable (Patient Billing)	21	22
10210	Clerk V, Accounts Payable	21	22
10212	Accounting	21	22
10703	Payroll	16	17
10704	Payroll Supervisor I	21	22
10705	Payroll Supervisor II	24	25
10706	Payroll Supervisor III	26	27

Changes to staffing benchmarks

The Housekeeping Clerk (benchmark 10308) had the staffing responsibilities removed, while the Nursing Staffing benchmarks were generalized to allow all staffing clerks to access them. They include Clerk IV, V and VI Staffing, and Staffing Coordinator.

“Although these benchmark amendments do not result in any wage grid increases, a realignment of position matches will occur, resulting in a substantial implementation cost from the fund,” says HEU classification representative Teresa Ford. “We tried to get the biggest bang for our buck, based on member feedback and priorities, and use the funds as creatively as possible.”

The Nursing Staffing benchmark series will now be opened up to include non-nursing staffing. These include: Clerk IV, Nursing Staffing benchmark 10310 (Grid 16); Clerk V, Nursing Staffing benchmark 10312 (Grid 21); Clerk VI, Nursing Staffing benchmark 10314 (Grid 24), and Nursing Staffing Coordinator benchmark 10316 (Grid 28).

Previously, many clerical workers performing non-nursing staffing were matched to the Clerk Housekeeping benchmark 10308 and paid at Grid 16. With these changes to the Nursing Staffing benchmark series, it will allow all employees performing staffing functions to be matched to the appropriate benchmark and wage grid. This will result in some employees moving from Grid 16 to anywhere from Grid 21, 24 or even Grid 28.

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“Housekeeping” changes with no wage increase

Earlier negotiations had resolved the issue of cost-sharing (21 per cent) wage-sensitive benefits – such as statutory deductions like CPP and EI – on a without precedent and without prejudice basis, as well as many benchmark “housekeeping” matters.

Those housekeeping changes include: ensuring the qualifications were consistent in each class series as well as within the clerical job family; renaming the class series Clerk Steno to Clerk General, Business Office to Finance, and Medical Records to Health Records. Also, the reference to “stenographic” and to “take and transcribe shorthand” was removed, while “Dictaphone” was changed to “Dictation Equipment”, and “telex” was changed to “fax, electronic format”.

Some class titles of benchmarks were also revised, such as Secretary and Administrative Secretary (job titles were reversed to accurately reflect the responsibilities), and Medical Steno was renamed Medical Transcriptionist.

The clerical benchmark review also secured a reduced typing speed in most benchmarks by five (5) wpm (except benchmarks 10311, 10603, 10605 and 10606). Additionally, the union successfully convinced the employer to change the term “typing” requirement to “keyboarding” after three years of discussions.

Admitting (OR Booking) benchmark revisions

The Admitting (OR Booking) benchmarks previously did not reference “outpatient” or “daycare” OR booking.

The following benchmarks will now include those references, which will allow some employees classified at Grid 16 to move up to either Grid 21, 24 or even Grid 33. They are: Clerk IV Admitting (OR Booking) benchmark 10004 (Grid 16); Clerk V Admitting (OR Booking) benchmark 10008 (Grid 21); Clerk VI Admitting (OR Booking) benchmark 10011 (Grid 24), and Supervisor (OR Booking) benchmark 10014 (Grid 33).

As an example: if an employee is “assigning patients or procedures to OR slates” in an outpatient or daycare setting such as an Ambulatory Daycare OR, then they may be moved from Grid 16 to Grid 21.

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New benchmark – Clerk IV(a) Admitting (Outpatient Booking)

The benchmark review committee was also successful in negotiating a new benchmark for a Clerk IV(a) Admitting (Outpatient Booking). The defining responsibility for this benchmark is “to determine outpatient appointment priority.” The interim rate of pay will be set at Grid 17, while the employer determines the number of employees performing this work. If any additional funding is left over, then that money will be applied to the grid rate to determine the final wage grid level.

Employers will have three full pay periods from January 20, 2010 to identify which employees are to be matched to this benchmark. Previously, employers had matched employees to the Admitting Clerk IV, benchmark 10002.

Where do we go from here?

The revisions to the clerical benchmarks will be published in three full pay periods. Retroactive pay going back to April 1, 2007, will then be paid within six pay periods from January 20, 2010.

Over the next six weeks, health employers will be identifying and making many determinations about employees’ benchmark matches. It’s important for members to look at the benchmarks employers have matched them to, and if they are not in agreement, they should get a copy of their job description and address it first with their employer. Any questions or concerns should then be brought to the union by contacting Teresa Ford by email at <tford@heu.org>.

The clerical benchmark review committee’s union representatives are Barb Burke (Penticton local), Carol Kenzie (Kelowna local), Shelley Adams-Turner (Surrey local), Teresa Ford (HEU classification representative), and BCGEU representatives Lorraine Yigit and Julie Eckert.

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