Nursing Programs Essential Functions

November 2026

Core Performance Standards for Admission and Progression

The following non-academic essential functions must be met, with or without reasonable accommodations, to enter, progress through, and complete the Associate Degree Nursing Program and to meet the expectations of employment in the nursing profession. These standards are provided to assist students in assessing whether nursing is an appropriate career choice.

Cognitive/Critical Thinking

Students must possess the ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize information sufficient for clinical judgment.

Examples:

- Apply information and engage in critical thinking in classroom, laboratory, and clinical settings.
- Identify cause-and-effect relationships in clinical situations.
- Concentrate sufficiently to perform nursing tasks within the scope of practice.
- Respond appropriately to constructive feedback.
- Perform mathematical calculations involving time, weight, measurement, flow rates, volume, ratios, and fractions.
- Read measurement markings, count rates, interpret digital displays, and accurately calculate intake and output.

Communication

Students must be able to communicate effectively in English through verbal, written, and electronic formats with patients, families, faculty, staff, peers, and other members of the healthcare team.

Examples:

- Actively listen, clarify information, and respond appropriately to verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Establish and maintain professional relationships with patients and colleagues.
- Demonstrate appropriate impulse control and professional maturity.
- Communicate effectively in both written and verbal formats.
- Document and interpret nursing actions and patient responses in a clear, professional, and timely manner.
- Respond to others in an accepting and respectful manner.
- Use computers effectively and professionally to acquire information and communicate with others.

Motor Skills and Physical Ability

Students must possess sufficient physical endurance, strength, coordination, and motor function to safely and effectively perform nursing responsibilities.

Examples:

- Safely maneuver equipment and patients while performing nursing duties.
- Manipulate dials and controls and perform palpation to assess tissue characteristics and pulse quality.
- Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Manipulate small equipment and supplies, including syringes, ampules, vials, medication packages, and intravenous catheters.
- Coordinate simultaneous movements and perform occasional overhead reaching.
- Support and protect patients during transfers, ambulation, and mobility activities, with or without assistive devices.

- Participate fully in clinical and laboratory experiences that may extend up to 12 hours.
- Lift, push, pull, bend, squat, and manipulate objects weighing up to 50 pounds.
- Tolerate extended periods of sitting, standing, lifting, and walking.

Professional Conduct and Behavioral Skills

Students must demonstrate professionalism, integrity, accountability, reliability, and emotional stability in academic, laboratory, and clinical environments.

Examples:

- Adapt effectively to stressful, unpredictable, or rapidly changing situations.
- Recognize when personal behavior interferes with learning or professional relationships and make appropriate adjustments.
- Maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, classmates, faculty, staff, and healthcare professionals.
- Demonstrate emotional stability necessary for participation in academic and clinical experiences.
- Uphold professional standards of nursing practice.
- Protect patient privacy and confidentiality.
- Function effectively as a member of an academic or healthcare team.
- Use professional and grammatically correct communication.
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity.
- Complete assignments, examinations, and clinical requirements within established deadlines.
- Arrive on time for classes, laboratories, and clinical experiences.
- Maintain professional appearance and personal hygiene in accordance with program and clinical agency requirements.
- Wear clothing that is professional and appropriate for the learning environment.
- Use learning management systems, clinical information systems, and other required technologies appropriately.
- Use email and electronic communications in a professional and ethical manner.
- Access current information from reliable sources to support patient care.

Sensory Abilities

Student must possess sufficient sensory abilities to monitor, assess, and respond to patient needs.

Hearing

Student must be able to hear sounds necessary for patient assessment and safe nursing practice.

Examples:

- Hear and respond to alarms, emergency signals, and calls for assistance.
- Assess blood pressure, heart sounds, lung sounds, and other body sounds with or without corrective devices.

Vision

Students must possess sufficient visual ability to safely perform nursing care.

Examples:

- Observe patient responses and physical findings.
- Recognize and interpret facial expressions and body language.
- Detect color changes and other visual indicators of patient condition.
- Identify normal and abnormal patterns of movement.

- Read medication labels, equipment displays, written documents, and electronic health records.
- Assess the surrounding environment for safety concerns.

Tactile Ability

Students must possess sufficient tactile ability to perform physical assessments and nursing interventions.

Examples:

- Perform palpation.
- Detect changes in body temperature and tissue characteristics.
- Identify abnormalities of surface texture and vibration.
- Perform physical assessments and nursing procedures such as urinary catheter insertion and intravenous catheter placement.

Olfactory Ability

Students must possess sufficient sense of smell to assist in patient assessments and environmental safety

Examples:

- Detect burning equipment, smoke, chemical odors, or odors associated with patient conditions.

Student Attestation

I attest that I am able to perform these Essential Functions with or without reasonable accommodations in order to enter, remain in, and complete the Nursing Program.

Student Signature:

Date:

Print Name: