

NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
NURSING PROGRAMS
ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The student is expected to perform the same "essential functions of the employment position" as a licensed nurse. "A student must be able to practice nursing as it is defined in the law. He/she must have adequate cognitive, sensory and psychomotor functioning to effectively implement nursing care" (PA State Board of Nursing memo, 2/28/01, "Factors which Impact on Nursing Education Program Policies"). A student with sensory or motor-skill/strength limitations must be able to demonstrate the ability to meet those standards for performance, using adaptive equipment where necessary. "A student must be able to tolerate physically taxing activities and exercise restraint during stressful situations in order to meet the demands of the profession" (PA SBN memo).

Accordingly, the standards for classroom and clinical participation will be interpreted by the Nursing Department to reflect the essential functions of a nurse's employment. The student must display physical and emotional stability such that his/her behavior will not lead to excessive absence from the classroom or clinical setting or render him/her unable to meet established reasonable standards of performance in the classroom or clinical setting.

The *essential functions* are the basic cognitive, psychomotor, and affective activities that are essential to successful completion of the NCC nursing curriculum in leading to initial licensure as a nurse. Essential functions are categorized as: Sensory (tactile, visual, hearing and smell) communication, psychomotor (gross motor skills, fine motor skills, physical endurance, physical strength, mobility), intellectual and cognitive abilities (reading, arithmetic competence, analytic thinking, and critical thinking), professional and social attributes (interpersonal skills, and communication and application of legal/ethical principles and professional standards).

The following are examples of essential functional abilities needed to be successful in the Nursing Program. All students are required to meet these essential functions. Allowing for individual differences, and encouraging program completion for students with a documented disability, the Nursing Program will work with the student and Disability Services to provide any reasonable accommodation to meet these essential functions. Contact the Nursing Department at 610-861-5376 if you have questions regarding these requirements.

Sensory

Nursing students must be able to accurately observe both close at hand and at a distance to learn skills and to gather data. Students must possess functional use of the senses that permit such observation.

<p><u>Visual:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See objects up to 20 inches away (e.g., information on a computer screen, skin conditions)• See objects up to 20 feet away (e.g., client in a room)• See objects more than 20 feet away (e.g., client at end of hall)• Use depth perception• Use peripheral vision• Distinguish color (e.g. color codes on supplies, charts, bed)• Distinguish color intensity (e.g. flushed skins, skin paleness)	<p><u>Visual acuity sufficient to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observe changes in skin condition including distinguishing change in skin integrity, breathing patterns (including absence of respiratory movement) and color intensity such as the ability to identify cyanosis• Identification of allergic responses such as skin rashes• Access patient information on computer screens• Read very fine print on medication labels, monitor strips, equipment calibrations• Draw up correct quantity of medication into syringe
<p><u>Hearing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hear normal speaking level sounds (e.g. person-to-person report)• Hear faint voices• Hear faint body sounds (e.g. blood pressure sounds, assessment placement of tubes)• Hear in situations when not able to see lips (e.g., when masks are used)• Hear auditory alarms (e.g. monitors, fire alarms, call bells)	<p><u>Hearing acuity sufficient to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess changes in heart, breath, abdominal, vascular sounds• Take blood pressure
<p><u>Smell:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detect odors from client (e.g., foul smelling drainage, alcohol breath, etc.)• Detect smoke• Detect gases or noxious smells	<p><u>Smell sufficient to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Detect odors exhibited by body fluids which may be indicative of disease processes

Tactile

Ability sufficient to perform physical assessments, examinations and perform procedures.

Nursing Department Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feel vibrations• Feel differences in sizes, shapes• Detect temperature• Feel differences in surface characteristics• Detect environmental temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Palpate pulses<input type="checkbox"/> Identify body landmarks<input type="checkbox"/> Assess skin temperature<input type="checkbox"/> Assess skin turgor<input type="checkbox"/> Check for drafts

Communication

Nursing students must be able to communicate effectively (verbally and in writing) and efficiently in English.

Nursing Department Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach (e.g. client/family about health care• Explain procedures• Give oral reports (e.g., report on client's condition to others)• Interact with others (e.g., health care workers)• Speak on the telephone• Influence people• Direct activities of others• Convey information through writing (e.g., progress notes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with patients/clients, family members and health care providers regarding the individual's plan of care.<input type="checkbox"/> Read and comprehend printed materials and documents.<input type="checkbox"/> Document clearly and correctly on patient's medical record for legal documentation.<input type="checkbox"/> Transmit information through written documents that use good grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation.<input type="checkbox"/> Access laboratory data via automated information system.<input type="checkbox"/> Clarify the meaning of non-verbal communication.<input type="checkbox"/> Use physical touch as a therapeutic non-verbal intervention.<input type="checkbox"/> Present oral reports.<input type="checkbox"/> Clarify physician orders.

Psychomotor Skills

Nursing students must have sufficient motor capacities and mobility to execute the various tasks and physical maneuvers that are required within the program. Candidates must be able to display motor functioning sufficient to fulfill the roles toward which the program educates.

Nursing Department Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<p><u>Gross Motor Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move within confined spaces • Sit and maintain balance • Stand and maintain balance • Reach above shoulders (e.g., IV poles) • Reach below waist (e.g., plug electrical appliance into wall outlets) • Stoop and squat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Administer medication via a variety of routes <input type="checkbox"/> Institute appropriate nursing interventions to stabilize a patient's condition and/or prevent complications
<p><u>Fine motor skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up objects with hands • Grasp small objects with hands (e.g., IV tubing, pencil) • Write with pen or pencil • Key/type (e.g., use a computer) • Pinch/pick or otherwise work with fingers (e.g., manipulate a syringe) • Squeeze with fingers (e.g., eye dropper) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate eyes and hands/fingers with speed and accuracy to make precise movements when providing patient care <input type="checkbox"/> Calibrate equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Draw up solution/medication in a syringe <input type="checkbox"/> Twist objects with hands <input type="checkbox"/> Take vital signs, including blood pressure, pulse, temperature, respiratory rates, pulse oximetry <input type="checkbox"/> Insert catheters <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up or grasp small objects <input type="checkbox"/> Transmit information via electronic means
<p><u>Physical endurance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand (e.g., at client side during surgical or therapeutic procedure) • Sustain repetitive movements (e.g., CPR) • Maintain physical tolerance (e.g., work entire shift) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (e.g., move above patient to compress chest and manually ventilate patient) <input type="checkbox"/> Stand/walk to complete clinical day (e.g., 8 ½ hour shift) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete assigned clinical practice within an acceptable time period

<p><u>Physical strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push and pull 25 pounds • Support 25 pounds of weight • Lift 25 pounds • Move light objects weighing up to 10 lb. • Use upper body strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Position patients <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with ambulation <input type="checkbox"/> Move, transfer and lift patients <input type="checkbox"/> Assemble IV equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Perform CPR, physically restrain a client
<p><u>Mobility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twist • Bend • Stoop/squat • Move quickly (e.g., response to an emergency) • Climb (e.g., ladders/stools/stairs) • Walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maneuver in small spaces* <input type="checkbox"/> Move independently from room to room <input type="checkbox"/> Twist, bend, stoop, engage in procedures and direct patient care <p>*While health care agencies must meet ADA physical access standards, potential clients and equipment may limit the amount of available space in which to move.</p>

Intellectual and Cognitive Abilities

Nursing students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, remember and apply information. Creative problem-solving and clinical reasoning require all of these intellectual abilities.

Nursing Department Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read and understand written documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read and understand English printed documents (e.g., policies, protocols, standards of care) <input type="checkbox"/> Read measurement marks

<p><u>Arithmetic Competence:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand columns of writing (e.g., flow sheet, charts) • Read digital displays • Read graphic printouts (e.g., EKG) • Calibrate equipment • Convert numbers to and/or from metric system • Read graphs (e.g., vital sign sheets) • Tell time • Measure time (e.g., count duration of contractions, etc.) • Count rates (e.g., drips/minute, pulse) • Use measuring tools (e.g., thermometer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use measurement tools recognized as central to the care of patients/clients <input type="checkbox"/> Perform dosage calculations in a time frame to deliver safe care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read measurement marks (e.g., measurement tapes, scales, etc.) • Add, subtract, multiply, and/or divide whole numbers • Compute fractions (e.g., medication dosages) • Use a calculator • Write numbers in records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use measurement tools recognized as central to the care of patients/clients. <input type="checkbox"/> Perform dosage calculations in a time frame to deliver safe care
<p><u>Analytical Thinking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer knowledge from one situation to another • Process information • Evaluate outcomes • Problem solve • Prioritize tasks • Use long-term memory • Use short-term memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Handle multiple tasks and problem solve simultaneously <input type="checkbox"/> Assimilate and apply knowledge acquired from multiple learning experiences Seek supervision and consultation in a timely manner
<p><u>Critical Thinking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cause-effect relationships • Integrate knowledge and skills • Sequence information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Utilize assessment data in determining nursing diagnoses <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize tasks <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehend and apply abstract concepts

Professional and Social Attributes

Nursing students must exercise good judgment and promptly complete all responsibilities required of each program. They must develop mature, sensitive, and effective professional relationships with others. They must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities. Concern for others, interpersonal competence and motivation are requisite for the programs.

School of Nursing Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<p><u>Interpersonal Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Negotiate interpersonal conflict<li>• Respect differences in clients<li>• Establish rapport with clients<li>• Establish rapport with co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>☐ Show respect for the differences in patients/clients and co-workers<li>☐ Function as a member of an interdisciplinary team (e.g., consult, negotiate, share)<li>☐ Establish rapport with patients/clients <li>☐ Participate in partnered and group efforts in classroom and clinical learning activities<li>☐ Practice in a manner that is nonjudgmental and non-discriminatory<li>☐ Interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds

<p><u>Emotional Stability:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish therapeutic boundaries • Provide client with emotional support • Adapt to changing environment/stress • Deal with the unexpected (e.g., client going bad, crisis) • Focus attention on tasks • Monitor own emotions • Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently • Handle strong emotions (e.g., grief) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Function effectively under stress □ Assume responsibility/accountability for own actions □ Provide patient/family with emotional support □ Adapt effectively to changing environments and increasing tension levels in a variety of situations (e.g., learning, patient care, emergencies)
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Application of Legal/Ethical Principles and Professional Standards

Nursing students must demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors and must perform in an ethical manner in dealing with others. The nursing programs require personal integrity and the adherence to standards that reflect the values and functions of the profession. These requirements align with the NCC Policy on Student Professional Conduct available at

<http://catalog.northampton.edu/Policies-CollegeAcademic/Policy-on-Student-ProfessionalConduct.htm>

Department of Nursing Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the application of the professional nursing Code of Ethics to clinical practice • Adhere to the practice standards of the nursing profession • Adhere to the legal/ethical standards set forth by the Board of Nurse Examiners for the State of Pennsylvania • Apply negotiation and mediation skills in ethical decision making • Reflect the values of the profession in their practice • Demonstrate accountability for one's own practice • Take action to protect the public from the unsafe, illegal or unethical practice of others • Participate in the legal/regulatory/ social policy processes that influence health care and nursing practice • Act as a moral agent in the practice of nursing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Abide by professional standards of practice <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate ethical and professional attitudes and conduct <input type="checkbox"/> Assist individuals and families in making end-of-life decision <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in ethics committee activities relative to patients/ clients receiving nursing care <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in professional nursing organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate for the welfare of individuals and groups <input type="checkbox"/> Practice in a manner that preserves/protects client autonomy, dignity and rights <input type="checkbox"/> Act as a nurse advocate Maintain client confidentiality

Data adapted from "A Validation Study: Functional Abilities Essential for Nursing Practice" by Carolyn J. Yocom, National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc., 1996