

Academic and Technical Standards (Essential Functions)*

Nurses must possess the physical and cognitive capacity, emotional stability, and communication skills essential for the delivery of safe, effective patient care. Independent physical mobility and manual dexterity are essential for nursing. Students admitted to the program to pursue a nursing career, with or without accommodation, must be able to meet the following academic and technical standards (essential functions).

1. **Visual acuity** sufficient to assess clients and their environments and to implement the nursing care plans that are developed from such assessments.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Detect changes in skin color or condition
- Collect data from recording equipment and measurement devices used in client care
- Detect a fire in a client area and initiate emergency action
- Draw up the correct quantity of medication into a syringe

2. **Hearing ability** sufficient to assess clients and their environments and to implement the nursing care plans that are developed from such assessments.

Examples of relevant activities are:

- Detect sounds related to bodily functions using a stethoscope
- Detect audible alarms e.g. monitors, fire alarms, call bells
- Communicate clearly in telephone conversations
- Communicate effectively with clients and with other members of the healthcare team in a variety of settings, including isolation and the operating room where healthcare team members are often wearing masks

3. **Olfactory ability** sufficient to assess clients and to implement the nursing care plans that are developed from such assessments.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Detect odors of bodily fluids or spoiled foods
- Detect smoke from burning materials

4. **Tactile ability** sufficient to assess clients and to implement the nursing care plans that are developed from such assessments.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Detect changes in skin temperature
- Detect unsafe temperature levels in heat-producing devices used in client care
- Detect anatomical abnormalities, such as subcutaneous crepitus, edema, or infiltrated intravenous fluid

5. **Fine motor skills** sufficient to perform psychomotor skills integral to

client care.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Safely dispose of needles in sharps containers
- Accurately place and maintain position of stethoscope for detecting sounds of bodily functions
- Manipulate small equipment and containers, such as syringes, vials, ampules, and medication packages, to administer medications

6. **Strength and mobility** sufficient to perform client care activities and emergency procedures.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Safely transfer clients in and out of bed and assist them with ambulation using appropriate devices e.g. a gait belt to prevent client falls, mechanical lift devices
- Safely control the fall of an ambulating client, if it occurs, by slowly lowering the client
- Lift or move clients or objects, pull or push objects, weighing up to 50 pounds, obtain appropriate assistance when needed
- Turn and position clients as needed to prevent complications due to bed rest
- Hang intravenous bags at the appropriate level (shoulder or higher level)
- Accurately read the volumes in body fluid collection devices hung or placed below bed level
- Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation

7. **Physical endurance** sufficient to complete assigned periods of clinical practice (e.g. 8 or 12 hour shifts, days, evenings or nights, weekends, holidays) with acceptable speed (an acceptable speed of function is reflected by ability to carry out the usual client care assignment for a particular point in the program within the allotted clinical time).

8. **Ability to speak, comprehend, read, and write in English** at a level that meets the need for accurate, clear, and effective communication with individuals, families, and groups respecting social, cultural and spiritual diversity.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Give clear oral reports
- Read watches with second hands
- Read graphs
- Negotiate interpersonal conflict
- Read and understand English in printed and handwritten documents
- Write legibly in English in clients' charts

9. **Emotional stability** to function effectively under stress, to adapt to changing situations, to demonstrate honesty and integrity, and to follow through on assigned client care responsibilities.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Deal with the unexpected e.g. frequently changing client status
- Handle strong emotions
- Be flexible with changing environments and schedules in both class and clinical settings

10. **Cognitive ability** to collect, analyze, and integrate information and knowledge to make clinical judgments and decisions (with acceptable speed, as defined in #7 above) that promote positive client outcomes.

Examples of relevant activities:

- Respond appropriately in changing or emergency situations with sustained attention
- Perform math computations for medication dosage calculations both with and without a calculator
- Demonstrate skills of recall using both long and short term memory, inferential reasoning, predicting possible outcomes, application of knowledge, and evaluation of predicted outcomes at appropriate level for point in program
- Demonstrate utilization of the nursing process in a systematic way
- Demonstrate ability to look at whole picture and critical relationships among elements of information
- Demonstrate ability to take the correct action in a client situation based on previous learning

(*compilation/adaptation with permission from Rogue Community, Chemeketa Community and Portland Community Colleges)