

National Park College
Division of Nursing

Essential Function Statement

The essential functions are the basic cognitive, psychomotor, and affective activities that are essential to successful completion of the NPC nursing curriculum and in leading to initial licensure as a nurse. Essential functions are categorized as: Intellectual and cognitive abilities (reading, arithmetic competence, analytical thinking and critical thinking), professional and social attributes (interpersonal skills, communication, and professional standards). Sensory (tactile, visual, hearing and olfactory) communication, psychomotor (gross motor skills, fine motor skills, physical strength, and mobility), and emotional stability.

The following are examples of essential functional abilities needed to be successful in the National Park College Nursing Program. All students are required to meet all, but not limited to, these 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 501-760-4290/4160 if you have questions regarding these requirements.

Critical Thinking

- Standard: Critical Thinking ability for effective clinical reasoning and clinical judgment consistent with level of educational preparation.
- Examples:
 - Identification of cause/effect relationships in clinical situations
 - Use of the nursing process in the development of patient care plans
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of nursing interventions
 - Handle multiple tasks and problem solve simultaneously in stressful situations
 - Apply classroom knowledge to the clinical setting
 - Comprehend and apply abstract and concrete concepts

Intellectual and Cognitive Abilities

- Standard: The ability to collect and analyze data to aid in problem solving in both
- Examples:
 - Remember multiple messages and information and be able to apply them as necessary.
 - Make appropriate rapid decisions in stressful or emergency situations
 - Adapt rapidly to environmental changes and multiple task demands.
 - Maintain concentration and focus in professional care settings.
 - Use and analyze measurement tools recognized as central to the care of patients/clients (thermometer, manual blood pressure cuff, etc.)
 - Read and understand English printed documents (policies, protocols, standards of care)
 - Read measurement marks
 - Read digital displays (thermometer, blood pressure machines, monitors, ventilators, etc.)
 - Read graphic printouts (EKG's)
 - Perform dosage calculations in a time frame to deliver safe care
 - Add, subtract, multiply, and or divide whole numbers
 - Compute fractions (medication doses)
 - Utilization of a calculator
 - Convert numbers to and/or from metric system
 - Tell time on a wall clock, utilize a second hand for counting seconds
 - Measure time (count duration of contractions)
 - Count rates (pulse, heartrate)
 - Read and understand columns of writing (flowsheets, charts)

Professional Relationships

- Standard: Interpersonal skills sufficient for professional interactions with a diverse population of individuals, families and groups
- Examples:
 - Establishment of rapport with patients/clients and colleagues
 - Capacity to engage in successful conflict resolution, including negotiating interpersonal conflict.
 - Respect differences in patients/clients and co-workers.
 - Function as an interdisciplinary team member.
 - Peer accountability
 - Including participation in group work and clinical and classroom activities
 - Interact with patients/clients, family members, team members, and peers from various social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.
 - Practice in a manner that is non-judgmental and non-discriminatory.

Communication

- Standard: Communication adeptness sufficient for verbal and written professional interactions
- Examples:
 - Explanation of treatment procedures, initiation of health teaching.
 - Teaching of the patient/client and family, patient/family understanding of teaching
 - Documentation and interpretation of nursing actions and patient/client responses in the patients chart/medical record
 - Assessments, care plans, progress notes, vital signs, orders, etc.
 - Clarify the meaning of non-verbal communication.
 - Use physical touch as a therapeutic non-verbal intervention.
 - Communicate relevant, accurate, and complete information in a concise and clear manner both verbally and in writing to patients and health care members.

Mobility

- Standard: Physical abilities sufficient for movement from room to room and in small spaces
- Examples:
 - Move about within a patient's room, work spaces and treatment areas
 - Stand, bend, walk, stoop, squat while providing patient care.
 - Administration of rescue procedures-cardiopulmonary resuscitation
 - Move above patient for chest compressions and manually ventilate patient
 - Move, position, turn, transfer, assist with lifting and/or carrying adult or pediatric patients without injury to patient, self, or others.
 - Lift, push, pull or transfer (bed-to-chair, bed-to-bed) an adult or pediatric patient.

Motor Skills

- Standard: Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient for providing safe, effective nursing care
- Examples:
 - Calibration and use of equipment
 - Therapeutic positioning of patients
 - Handle small delicate equipment/objects or hand-held devices without extraneous movements, contamination or destruction.
 - Use hands, wrists, and arms to apply up to 10 pounds of pressure to bleeding sites or when performing CPR.
 - Coordinate eye/hand, fine and gross motor movements.
 - Perform electronic keyboarding/documentation and or extensive writing with a pen and/or pencil.
 - Administer medication via a variety of routes.
 - Draw up medication/solution in a ½ mL syringe
 - Pinch/pick or otherwise work with fingers (manipulate a syringe)
 - Squeeze with fingers (eye dropper)
 - Grasp small objects with hands (IV catheters, pencil, pills)

Hearing Ability

- Standard: Auditory ability sufficient for monitoring and assessing health needs
- Examples:
 - Ability to hear monitoring device alarm(s), emergency signals, ringing telephones, and calls for assistance
 - Be able to respond and react immediately to spoken instruction and/or monitor equipment
 - Ability to discern auscultated sounds and cries for help
 - Assess changes in heart, breath, abdominal, vascular sounds using a stethoscope or modified stethoscope
 - Distinguish sounds and understand verbal communication in environments with multiple auditory inputs

Visual Ability

- Standard: Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in patient care
- Examples:
 - Ability to observe patient's condition and responses to treatments
 - Observe changes in skin integrity
 - Observe changes in breathing patterns (including absence of respiratory movement)
 - Skin color/intensity such as the ability to identify cyanosis
 - Allergic responses such as skin rashes
 - Identify signs/symptoms
 - Wound drainage, color, appearance, depth, etc.
 - Distinguish and appropriately respond to multiple visual inputs
 - Prepare and administer medications including correct use of small calibrated syringes (1/2 mL), ampules, etc.

Tactile Ability

- Standard: Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment
- Examples
 - Ability to palpate in physical examinations and various therapeutic interventions
 - Palpate for pulse
 - Temperature
 - Texture hardness or softness
 - Physical landmarks
 - Assess skin turgor
 - Assess rashes
 - Palpate veins

Olfactory Ability

- Standard: Olfactory ability sufficient to discern various odors from patients and the environment
- Examples:
 - Ability to detect smoke
 - Ability to tolerate occasional unpleasant odors
 - Ability to detect odors exhibited by body fluids which may be indicative of a disease process
 - Foul smelling drainage
 - Alcohol breath

Emotional Stability

- Standard: Must develop mature, sensitive, and effective professional relationships with others. Must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and function effectively under stress and be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities.
- Examples
 - Establish therapeutic boundaries with patients/clients and families as well as instructors
 - Provide patient/client and/or families with emotional support
 - Adapt to changing environments/stressors
 - Function effectively under said stress
 - Cope with difficult situations
 - Death of a patient
 - Failure of an exam/test
 - Personal crisis
 - Provide unbiased non-judgmental care to patients and families with belief systems that may differ from your own
 - Focus attention on tasks
 - Monitor own emotions
 - Know when to ask for help from a peer, teacher, or clinical instructor
 - Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently
 - Handle strong emotions
 - Grief
 - Assume responsibility/accountability for own actions
 - Adapt effectively to changing environments and increasing tension levels in a variety of situations (classroom, clinical, patient care, emergencies)

Data and form adapted from “The Americans with Disabilities Act; Implications for Nursing Education” (8/2018) and additional data adapted from the University of Arkansas Little Rock Department of Nursing Essential Functions Statement (8/2018).

<https://www.sreb.org/publication/americans-disabilities-act>

<https://ualr.edu/nursing/become-a-nurse/essential-functions-statement/>