FUNCTIONAL ABILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR NURSING STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

In order for safe nursing practice to occur and for students to be qualified to participate in and complete the program, all nursing students must be able to perform these essential functions. The programs will provide qualified disabled students with reasonable accommodations that are necessary to enable them to meet the nursing care standards required of them.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the National Council of State Boards (NCSBN) have defined a thorough list of competencies necessary for the professional practice of nursing. These competencies were defined from an extensive study of practicing nurses and can be defined in general terms as:

1. Ability to see, hear, touch, smell, and distinguish colors;
2. Oral and writing ability with accuracy, clarity, and efficiency;
3. Manual dexterity, gross and fine movements;
4. Ability to learn, think critically, analyze, assess, solve problems, and reach judgment; and
5. Emotional stability and ability to accept responsibility and accountability.

All educational programs are dedicated to principles of nondiscrimination. This includes a commitment not to discriminate against qualified disabled applicants and students.

If a student cannot perform the function in the manner indicated, he or she will not necessarily be precluded from participating in the program, but will need to be able to perform the essential functions with or without reasonable accommodation.

Specific functional abilities for nursing students are identified in the following pages.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE IN THE CLASSROOM, LABORATORY, OR CLINICAL SETTING

COGNITIVE

The student must be able to thoroughly, efficiently and reliably:

1. recall information from reading material, lecture, discussion, patient evaluation;
2. interpret and extrapolate information from reading material, lecture, discussion, patient evaluation;
3. apply information from reading material, lecture, discussion, patient evaluation;
4. analyze information from reading material, lecture, discussion, patient evaluation;

5. synthesize information from reading material, lecture, discussion, patient evaluation; and

6. evaluate or form judgments about information from reading material, lecture, discussion, patient evaluation.

AFFECTIVE

The student must be able to:

1. establish professional, trusting, empathetic relationships with a variety of individuals;

2. demonstrate respect and engage in non-judgmental interactions regardless of individuals’ life-styles and cultures;

3. accomplish work effectively in groups;

4. meet externally determined deadlines;

5. be present at required activities in classroom, lab and clinical settings; and

6. attend to cognitive, communication and psychomotor tasks for as long as three hours at a time.

COMMUNICATION

The student must be able to:

1. hear the spoken word;

2. attend selectively and in a controlled manner to various types of communication, including the spoken and written word and non-verbal communication;

3. speak intelligibly in English;

4. communicate in writing, intelligibly in English;

5. relay information in oral and written forms reliably, thoroughly and intelligibly to individuals and groups; and

6. read English (typed and hand-written).

PSYCHOMOTOR

The student must be able to:
1. reliably inspect and observe the skin, facial expression, anatomical structures, posture, and movement of others, typically by sight;

2. assess blood pressure, lung and heart sounds, typically by listening with a stethoscope;

3. reliably read equipment dials and monitors, typically by sight;

4. feel pulses, skin condition, muscle and tendon activity, joint and limb movement, typically with hands and fingers;

5. negotiate level, ramps and stairs to assist patients/classmates appropriately, typically from an upright position;

6. react and effectively respond quickly to sudden or unexpected movements of patients;

7. manipulate dials, knobs, electrodes and other small to large parts and pieces of equipment typically with the hands/fingers;

8. lift at least approximately 100 pounds in order to move dependent patients;

9. move continuously throughout an 8 to 12 hour work day;

10. transport self from one room to another, from one floor to another; and

11. don and doff clothing, including gowns, masks, gloves.

Adapted from:


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

National Council of State Boards of Nursing website for more information:

http://www.ncsbn.org/regualtion/nursingpractice_nursing_practice_licensing.asp