

Functional Abilities Requirements

Introduction

The knowledge, skills, and abilities required to safely and effectively practice nursing are varied and complex. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing has defined the following functional abilities that a nurse must possess to practice safely and effectively. To ensure that your decision to pursue a career in nursing is the correct one for you; we ask that you review them. They are the non-academic requirements of the program, and they comprise physical, emotional, and professional demands required of a nurse. Take into consideration whether you can perform the following functions, with or without accommodations. If you determine that you are unable to do any of the skills listed and you have a documented disability, you will then need to determine if a reasonable accommodation can be provided. Throughout your education program, you will find yourself in a variety learning experiences. You will need to take into consideration the specifics of each position and the percentage of time the skill will be needed in order to determine if reasonable accommodations can be provided. To request accommodations, you will need to contact the campus access office and present documentation of your disability.

Functional Ability Categories and Representative Activities/Attributes

Gross Motor Skills

- * Move within confined space
- * 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)

Fine Motor Skills

- * 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 computer)
- * Pinch/pick or otherwise work with fingers (e.g., manipulate a syringe)
- * Twist (e.g., turn objects/knobs using hands)
- * Squeeze with finger (e.g., eye dropper)

Physical Endurance

- * Stand (e.g., at patient side during surgical or therapeutic procedure)
- * Sustain repetitive movements (e.g., CPR)
- * Maintain physical tolerance (e.g., work entire shift)

Physical Strength

- * Push and pull 25 pounds (e.g., position patients)
- * Support 25 pounds of weight (e.g., ambulate patient)
- * Lift 25 pounds (e.g., pick up a child, transfer patient)
- * Move light objects weighing up to 10 pounds (e.g., IV poles)
- * Move heavy objects weighing from 11 to 50 pounds
- * Defend self against combative patient
- * Carry equipment/supplies
- * Use upper body strength (e.g., perform CPR, physically restrain a patient)
- * Squeeze with hands (e.g., operate fire extinguisher)

Mobility

- * Twist
- * Bend

- * Stoop/squat
- * Move quickly (e.g., ladders/stools/stairs)
- * Walk

Hearing

- * Hear normal speaking level sounds (e.g., person-to-person report)
- * Hear faint voices
- * Hear faint body sounds (e.g., blood pressure sounds, assess 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)

Visual

- * 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., patient in a room)
- * See objects more than 20 feet away (e.g., patient at end of hall)
- * Use depth perception
- * Use peripheral vision
- * Distinguish color intensity (e.g., color codes on supplies, charts, bed)
- * Distinguish color intensity (e.g., flushed skin, skin paleness)

Tactile

- * Feel vibrations (e.g., palpate pulses)
- * Detect temperature (e.g., skin solutions)
- * Feel differences in surface characteristics (e.g., skin turgor, rashes)
- * Feel differences in sizes, shapes (e.g., palpate vein, identify body landmarks)
- * Detect environmental temperature (e.g., check for drafts)

Smell

- * Detect odors from patient (e.g., foul smelling drainage, alcohol breath, etc.)
- * Detect smoke
- * Detect gases or noxious smells

Reading

- * Read and understand written documents (e.g., policies, protocols)

Arithmetic Competence

- * Read and understand columns of writing (flow sheet, charts)
- * Read digital displays
- * Read graphic printouts (e.g., EKG)
- * Calibrate equipment
- * Convert numbers to and/or from the 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)
- * 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

Emotional Stability

- * Establish therapeutic boundaries
- * Provide patient with emotional support
- * Adapt to changing environment/stress
- * Deal with the unexpected (e.g., patient going bad, crisis)
- * Focus attention on task
- * Monitor own emotions
- * Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently
- * Handle strong emotions (e.g., grief)

Analytical Thinking

- * Transfer knowledge from one situation to another
- * Process information
- * Evaluate outcomes
- * Problem solve
- * Prioritize tasks
- * Use long-term memory
- * Use short-term memory

Critical Thinking

- * Identify cause-effect relationships
- * Plan/control activities for others
- * Synthesize knowledge and skills
- * Sequence information

Interpersonal Skills

- * Negotiate interpersonal conflict
- * Respect differences in patients
- * Establish rapport with patients
- * Establish rapport with co-workers

Communication Skills

- * Teach (e.g., patient/family about health care)
- * Explain procedures
- * Give oral reports (e.g., report on patient'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)

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