

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY
WEST LAFAYETTE, INDIANA
SCHOOL OF NURSING**

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 2015

REVIEWED BY: Student Affairs

REVISED DATE: December 2021

REVIEW DATE: February 2026

SAFETY AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS POLICY

Purpose: To validate the academically accepted undergraduate and graduate student's ability to meet cognitive, affective, and psychomotor requirements of the curriculum with or without academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services, consistent with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Preamble: The Purdue University School of Nursing (PUSON) will make appropriate academic adjustments to facilitate enrollment and participation of qualified individuals with temporary or permanent disabilities. The School has established technical standards in an effort to provide a framework to balance several competing interests:

- i. The rights of applicants and students
- ii. The safety of students, their co-workers and patients
- iii. The significant clinical component of the School curricula
- iv. The requirements imposed on the School by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the accreditation body, and by clinical agency agreements allowing the School to place students in various health care organizations for clinical education.
- v. The conditions for licensure of School graduates.

These competing interests and the nature of nursing educational activities may prevent some prospective students with disabilities and students with disabilities from qualifying for enrollment or continued enrollment and may limit access to the academic program of the School of Nursing.

Scope: This policy applies to all prospective and current undergraduate and graduate students in the School of Nursing.

Policy: Full acceptance into the School of Nursing is two-tiered and based on two independent processes:

1. Academic acceptance based on established criteria and review of application
2. Receipt and approval of the "Safety and Technical Standards" form (attached)

Current students must continue to meet these safety and technical standards throughout the program. Students who are no longer able to meet the standards MUST notify their academic advisor immediately or face dismissal from the nursing program. If a student's inability to satisfy a technical standard is of a temporary nature, every reasonable effort will be made to rearrange the student's schedule in such a way as to provide the opportunity for satisfactory completion of the curriculum. In some cases, this may require students to extend their plans of study.

Procedure:

1. Initial verification

- a. Admitted students will be asked to complete, sign and date the Safety and Technical Standards Nursing Student Acknowledgement and Consent Form prior to Student Transition, Advising and Registration (VSTAR).
- b. This process does not preclude the student from being evaluated by the Disability Resource Center, Office of Dean of Students.
- c. Students for whom there is no clear decision point about ability to meet safety and technical standards will be presented to the School of Nursing Admissions Committee for further discovery.

2. Yearly verification

- a. Current students must continue to meet these safety and technical standards throughout the program. Students who are no longer able to meet the standards MUST notify their academic advisor immediately or face dismissal from the nursing program.

3. Episodic verification

- a. If a student is injured, becomes ill, or encounters any situation that changes her/his ability to meet the technical standards, the School of Nursing Student Services Office may request health care provider verification of the student's continued ability to meet the standards.
- b. A copy of the "Safety and Technical Standards" form and a cover memo for the health care provider to verify that they student can meet the safety and technical standards will be provided to the medical practitioner by the student.
- c. The student will return the health care provider-completed and signed form to the School of Nursing Student Services Office.
- d. The Student Affairs Committee will review the verification and evaluate any request for academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services to determine the adequacy of the supporting documentation and the reasonableness of the requested academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services and then follow the same process as outlined for initial verification.
- e. Until a final decision is made, a student whose ability to meet the safety and technical standards is being considered under this process will not be allowed to participate in clinical courses.

Disputing the Decision

A continuing student may appeal, in writing, the decision to the Head of the School of Nursing within ten (10) working days from the student's receipt of notice of the decision. The decision of the Head on appeal shall be final.

Misrepresentation

Any identified misrepresentation, falsification, or material omission of information by the applicant discovered during the acceptance process and deliberation or failure to disclose a change in status may exclude the student from continued clinical or classroom participation or immediate dismissal.

Please refer to these descriptors in completing the Safety and Technical Standards Nursing Student Acknowledgement and Consent Form.

1. Essential physical/neurological functions: Nursing students must be able to accurately observe close at hand and at a distance to learn skills and to gather data (e.g., observe an instructor’s movements, a patient’s gait or verbal response, a chemical reaction, a microscopic image, etc.). Students must possess functional use of the senses that permit such observation.

School of Nursing Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<p>Tactile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel vibrations • Feel differences in sizes, shapes • Detect temperature • Feel differences in surface characteristics • Detect environmental temperature 	<p>Tactile ability sufficient to perform physical assessments, examinations and procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • palpate pulses, detect fremitus • palpate vein • identify body landmarks • skin turgor, rashes • skin temperature • check for drafts • detect deviations in skin temperature, solutions, and environment
<p>Visual:</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 to distinguish elevation • Use peripheral vision • Distinguish color (e.g. color codes on supplies, charts, bed) • Distinguish color intensity (e.g. flushed skin, skin paleness) 	<p>Visual acuity sufficient to:</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 • Read accurately IV infusion pump screens, LED output on electronic devices and monitors • Distinguish tissue swelling, IV infiltration
<p>Hearing:</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) • Perceive origin of sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess changes in heart, breath, abdominal, vascular sounds. • Take blood pressure • Recognize electronic device alarms • Monitor multiple patients in an ICU
<p>Smell:</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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detect odors exhibited by body fluids which may be indicative of disease processes

2. Essential motor skills: Nursing students must have sufficient motor capacities and mobility to execute the various tasks and physical maneuvers that are required within each program. Candidates must be able to display motor capabilities and mobility to execute the various tasks and physical maneuvers that are required within each program. Candidates must be able to display motor function sufficient to fulfill the professional roles toward which each program educates.

School of Nursing Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<p>Gross motor skills</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"> • Administer medication via all routes including intravenous therapy. • Institute appropriate nursing interventions to stabilize a patient’s condition and/or prevent complications.
<p>Fine motor skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up objects with hands • Coordinate eyes and hands/fingers with speed and accuracy in making precise movements • 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"> • Adjust environment when providing patient care • Calibrate equipment • Draw up solution/medication in a syringe • Twist objects with hands • Take vital signs, including blood pressure, pulse, temperature, respiratory rates • Use pulse oximeter, and electrocardiogram. • Insert catheters • Pick up or grasp small objects used in patient care, use eye dropper • Transmit information via electronic means
<p>Physical endurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand (e.g., at client side during surgical or therapeutic procedure) • Sustain repetitive movements • Maintain physical tolerance for entire work shift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (e.g. move above patient to compress chest and manually ventilate patient) • Stand/walk to complete clinical day (e.g. 8/12 hour shift) • Complete assigned clinical practice within an acceptable time period
<p>Physical strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push and pull 25 pounds (e.g., position clients) • Support 25 pounds of weight (e.g., ambulate client) • Lift 25 pounds (e.g. pick up a child, transfer client) • Move light objects weighing up to 10 pounds (e.g., IV poles) • Use upper body strength (e.g., perform CPR, physically restrain a client) • Squeeze with hands (e.g., operate fire extinguisher) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position patients • Use transfer techniques in moving and lifting patient in all age groups and weights. • Assist with ambulation.
<p>Mobility</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"> • Maneuver in small spaces* • Move independently from room to room • 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>

3. Essential communication skills: Nursing students must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently. Students must be able to process and comprehend written and verbal material.

School of Nursing 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"> • Communicate with patients/clients, family members and health care providers regarding the individual’s plan of care. • Read and comprehend printed materials and documents. • Document clearly and correctly on patient’s medical record for legal documentation. • Transmit information through written documents that use good grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation. • Access laboratory data via automated information system. • Clarify the meaning of non-verbal communication. • Use physical touch as a therapeutic non-verbal intervention. • Present oral reports • Clarify physician orders

4. Essential judgment skills: 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 all programs.

School of Nursing Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal abilities essential to interact with individuals, families, and groups from diverse social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds • Make judgments based on scientific knowledge and thorough assessment of individual patient situations • Practice in a manner that is non-judgmental and non-discriminatory • Function as a contributing member of an interdisciplinary team • Recognize that decision making occurs in an environment of uncertainty and ambiguities • Demonstrate capacity to make sound decisions when under stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver nursing care within accepted timeframe allowing others to complete their responsibilities to patients • Create climate in which patients feel comfortable and able to make informed decisions about their health care • Practice safe care in high stress and/or ambiguous environments such as ICU, Emergency Department, mental health facilities and the community

5. Essential intellectual and cognitive skills: Nursing students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, integrate, remember and apply and evaluate information. Creative problem-solving and clinical reasoning require all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, many candidates must be able to comprehend three dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationship of structure.

School of Nursing Essential Functions	Clinical Examples
<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand written documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand English printed documents (e.g. policies, protocols, standards of care) • Read measurement marks
<p>Arithmetic Competence</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) • 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"> • Use measurement tools recognized as central to the care of patients/clients. • Perform dosage calculations in a time frame to deliver safe care • Assess and monitor patient status
<p>Analytical Thinking</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"> • Handle multiple tasks and problem solve simultaneously. • Assimilate and apply knowledge acquired from multiple learning experiences • Seek supervision and consultation in a timely manner
<p>Critical Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cause-effect relationships • Plan/control activities for others • Synthesize knowledge and skills • Sequence information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze assessment data in determining nursing diagnoses. • Prioritize tasks • Comprehend and apply abstract concepts

6. Essential emotional coping skills: Nursing students must have the emotional health to fully use their intellectual ability, exercise good judgment and complete all responsibilities requisite to the delivery of patient care. Students must be able to develop mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients and colleagues and be adaptable, flexible and able to function in the face of uncertainty.

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

Supporting Documents:

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2006). *The essentials of doctoral education for advanced nursing practice*. Washington, DC: Author.
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2008). *The essentials of baccalaureate education for professional nursing practice*. Washington, DC: Author.
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (1996). *The essentials of master’s education for advanced practice nursing*. Washington, DC: Author.
- University of Texas School of Nursing at Galveston (2002). *Essential functions of the baccalaureate nursing program*.
- Wendt, A. (2007). *Report of findings from the 2006 RN post entry-level practice analysis*. Chicago, IL: National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.
- Wendt, A., & Eich, M. (2007). *Report of findings from the 2006-2007 RN continuous practice analysis*. Chicago, IL: National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.
- Yocom, C. J. (1996). *Validation study: Functional abilities essential for nursing practice*. Chicago, IL: National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.