

Thomas Nelson Community College Nursing Education Functional Abilities

All individuals who apply for, and are students in one of the College's Nursing Education Programs, including persons with disabilities, must be able to perform essential functions included in this document either with or without accommodations. These essential functions are congruent with the Virginia State Board of Nurse Examiners expectations of any individual seeking initial licensure as a registered nurse.

Students who do, or believe that they may need accommodation(s) to successfully meet the minimum essential functions outlined below are encouraged to refer to the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) section of this handbook, as well as to establish contact with the College's Office of Disability Support Services. Students are also encouraged to refer to, and review the information in the College's [Student Handbook](#) for additional information.

It is the student's responsibility to provide their College issued accommodation(s) documentation [Instructional Accommodations Plan – IAP] to each of the faculty from whom they may receive instruction, assistance and/or are assessed or evaluated by prior to the instruction, assistance and/or assessment including, but not limited to all course/program activities (i.e. lecture, lab, simulation, and/or clinical. IAP's are not retroactive and will be effective from the time presented to, reviewed and signed by the faculty member. Students must meet the essential functional abilities with or without accommodation to be admitted to or continue their studies in one or more (their respective) of the College's Nursing Education Program(s).

Students are advised that it may become necessary for the Nursing Education Program faculty and/or leadership, Instructional Unit leadership (Division), and/or a representative of the College to collaborate with, and/or share accommodation information with one or more clinical sites to ensure that the required clinical time and skills can be completed at their facility. When it is necessary to share this information with program clinical partners, only the accommodation requirements will be shared, the program will NOT share any personally identifiable information with the program clinical partner when making these requests and/or clarifying clinical placement. As referred to later in this document, and other Nursing Education Program policies and procedures, the program may be required to release program participant (student and/or faculty) personally identifiable information, medical and/or immunization history, and/or academic information in accordance with program agreements, policies, procedures and/or program standards.

Essential functions are the basic skills (activities) that a student must be able to perform. Any student applicant who has met the necessary prerequisites and who can perform the essential functions of their respective Nursing Education Program, either with or without reasonable accommodations, will be considered for admission. A candidate must be able to perform the identified essential functions in a reasonably independent manner. The use of trained intermediaries is not permissible, in that the candidate's judgment would be mediated by someone else's power of observation and selection.

The "essential functions" are the basic cognitive, psychomotor, and affective activities that are essential to successful completion of the nursing education curriculum leading to initial certification and/or licensure as a nurse aide, practical (licensed practical) and/or professional (registered) nurse. Essential functions are categorized into the following functional areas: essential physical/neurological functions, essential motor skills, essential judgement skills, essential communications skills, essential intellectual and cognitive skills, and essential emotion coping skills. The essential functional skills required in each category have been identified as essential for a nurse aide, practical and/or professional nurse, and/or those entering an allied health profession that requires the provision of direct and/or indirect patient care, and they form the basis for the College's Nursing Education Program essential functions.

The College will review and consider reasonable and appropriate accommodation for students with a documented disability to participate fully in the student's respective educational program of study. The following standards and functional abilities are necessary for participation in the nursing program. The College, nor any of its educational programs and/or courses will be fundamentally altered to accommodate students.

I. 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. Students must possess functional use of the senses that permit such observation.	
I-A. Tactile	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel vibrations • Feel differences in sizes, shapes, surface characteristics • Detect temperature and temperature differences 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palpate pulses, detect fremitus • Palpate vein • Identify body landmarks • Assess for skin turgor, rashes, skin temperature • Detect deviations in skin temperature
I-B. Visual	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient visual acuity to make accurate observations. • Sufficient visual acuity to perform an accurate assessment close-up and at a distance. • Sufficient visual acuity to accurately read information presented in an electronic format. • Visualize objects at a close distance (e.g., information on a computer screen, skin conditions, wound dressing) • Visualize objects at a far distance (e.g., client in a room) 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate meaningfully in academic demonstrations and simulations. • Read school-related materials. • Use equipment safely. • Accurately read electronic health records. Complete a visual assessment of the patient. • Complete a visual assessment of the environment. • Distinguish color differences for assessments (e.g.: inflammation) or color-coded materials. • Monitor patients in low-light situations. • Accurately observe changes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin condition, including distinguishing change in skin integrity such as evidence of allergic response
I-B. Visual - Continued	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess adequate depth perception and peripheral vision • Distinguish color (e.g., color codes on supplies, charts, dressing drainage) • Distinguish color intensity (e.g., flushed skin, skin paleness) 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing patterns (including absence of respiratory movement) • Color intensity such as the ability to identify cyanosis or bleeding/drainage • Tissue swelling or edema such as with IV infiltration • Read medication administration records as printed on medication labels, equipment calibrations, IV infusion pumps, LED output on electronic devices • Perform skills necessary for medication administration such as drawing up correct quantity of medication into syringe
I-C. Auditory/Hearing	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear normal speaking level sounds (e.g., person-to-person report) • 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) • Sufficient auditory acuity to communicate with patients and co-workers. • Sufficient auditory acuity to perform assessments. • Sufficient auditory acuity to perceive emergency situations. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive and understand normal speaking voice when it is not possible to read lips, such as in surgery or low light-situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess • Vital signs • Accurately auscultate. • Changes in heart, breathing, abdominal, and vascular sounds • Ensure safety of weak or infirm patients (e.g. can hear a call for help). • Recognize electronic device alarms and auditory alarms such as call bells, fire alarms, etc. • Accurately respond to workplace alarms.

I-D. Olfactory/Smell	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient olfactory awareness to identify abnormal body odors. • Sufficient olfactory awareness to identify abnormal environmental odors. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detect odors from client • Detect odors exhibited by body fluids which may be indicative of disease processes • Detect foul smelling drainage. • Detect “fruity” breath associated with DKA. • Detect alcohol on breath. • Detect smoke. • Detect overheated equipment. • Detect gases or noxious smells
I-E. Multisensory	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient multisensory integration and stability to negotiate normal and abnormal environmental stimuli. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine environmental hazards related to fall risks through awareness and analysis of multiple environmental cues.
I-F. Tactile/Touch	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient tactile sensation to complete a physical assessment. • Sufficient tactile sensation to perform job-related technical tasks. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately assess pulse rate and characteristics. • Accurately identify a change in skin temperature or texture. • Accurately palpate body landmarks. • Identify equipment by touch. • Have awareness of dropping objects.
<p>II. Essential motor skills: Nursing students must have sufficient motor capacities and mobility to execute the various tasks and physical maneuvers that are required within the program. Students must be able to display motor function sufficient to fulfill the professional roles toward which the program educates.</p>	
II-A. Gross Motor Skills	
<p>Essential Functions</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, assess urine drainage) • Able to move from one location to another. • Able to maintain physical balance and stability. • Effective range of motion for provision of patient care. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer medication accurately • Safely care for patients such as implementing appropriate nursing interventions to stabilize a patient’s condition and/or prevent complications • Safely move patients to administer care • Transport self between patient rooms. • Transport self within confined spaces such as small or cluttered patient rooms. • Move quickly in response to an emergency • Rise from chair to provide for patient safety during an emergency. • Sit comfortably in order to promote effective face-to-face communication with patient in bed. • Stand with stability while holding a newborn or child. • Turn from side to side while transferring patient or doing a sterile dressing change. • Bend from waist, or stoop, or squat to empty drainage devices or insert therapeutic devices. • Reach above head, forward, below waist and out to sides in order to provide patient care as needed.

II-B. Fine Motor Skills	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up objects with hands • Coordinate eyes and hands/fingers with accuracy (e.g., drawing up medications, use roller clamp on IV tubing) • Grasp and use small objects with hands (e.g., IV tubing, pencil, manipulate a syringe) • Write with pen or pencil • Grasp/pinch. • Pick up small objects. • Squeeze objects. • Twist objects. • Typing/keyboarding skills 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safely prepare and administer medications • Take vital signs, including blood pressure, pulse, temperature, respiratory rates, pulse oximetry • Pick up or grasp and use small objects used in patient care such as IV roller clamps, eye dropper • Transmit information via electronic means as needed • Perform learned nursing skills such as trach care, insertion of catheters, etc. • Hold a pen/pencil and write. • Grasp and remove bandage tape. • Manipulate a syringe. • Pinch skin to give an injection. • Pick up scissors. • Pick up thermometer. • Squeeze an eye dropper. • Squeeze rubber inflation ball on blood pressure cuff. • Operate fire extinguisher. • Turn a doorknob to open a door • Turn a small knob on a monitor. • Use computers, keypads, etc.
II-C. Physical Endurance	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient energy level to perform duties • Stand (e.g., at client side during surgical or therapeutic procedure) • Sustain repetitive movements • Maintain physical tolerance for entire work shift 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a typical 8-12-hour nursing shift. • Sit or stand for several hours, as needed - for example, in surgery or while performing complex patient care or procedures. • Manage physically taxing workloads.
II-C. Physical Endurance- Continued	
	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation [CPR] (e.g., move above patient to compress chest and manually ventilate patient) • Stand, walk or move to complete clinical day (i.e., 8–12-hour shift) • Complete assigned clinical practice within the clinical day
II-D. Physical Strength	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push and pull objects weighing up to 25 pounds (e.g., position clients) • Provide physical support of 25 pounds of weight (e.g., ambulate client) • Lift and move objects weighing up to 25 pounds (e.g., pick up a child, transfer client) • Manipulate, move and/or raise/lower 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, use a bulb- type sphygmomanometer) • Defend self or restrain another. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <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 • Push a wheelchair. • Position a patient in bed. • Assist an infirm patient out of bed. • Assist an infirm patient to ambulate to a chair or bathroom. • Pick up a child. • Lift a side rail on a bed. • Carry necessary equipment from one location to another. • Assist with transfer of adult patient from gurney to bed or vice versa. • Take evasive action if accosted. • Protect patient from self-inflicted injury.

II-E. Mobility	
Essential Functions <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/Move 	Clinical Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maneuver in the confined and/or other patient care areas • Move independently from room to room • Engage in direct patient care
III. 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.	
III-A. Communication	
Essential Functions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can effectively read information written in English. • Can effectively communicate verbally in English. • Can effectively communicate in writing • Teach (e.g., client/family about healthcare) • Explain procedures • Give oral and written 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 	Clinical Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiently access, read and interpret medical orders. • Efficiently access, read and interpret patient care notes. • Effectively read current professional literature. • Verbalize an oral report on a patient. • Verbally interview a patient. • Effectively teach necessary information for health promotion or maintenance. • Speak clearly on the telephone. • Give instructions to personnel. • Clarify information.
III-A. Communication - Continued	
	Clinical Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use both electronic and written medical record systems. • Communicate with patients/clients, family members and health care providers • Read, speak and comprehend English • 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 • Be able to access and document on the electronic medical record • Clarify the meaning of verbal and non-verbal communication • Use physical touch as a therapeutic non-verbal intervention • Present oral reports • Clarify physician orders
IV. Essential judgment skills: Nursing students must exercise good judgment and promptly complete all responsibilities required of the 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 motivations are requisite for the program.	
IV-A. Judgement	
Essential Functions <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 	Clinical Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver patient care safely in a manner that is non-judgmental and non-discriminatory • Work as a member of the patient care interdisciplinary team • Create climate in which patients feel comfortable and able to make informed decisions about their healthcare • Practice safe care in high-stress and/or ambiguous environments such as ICU, Emergency Department, mental health facilities, and the community

IV-B. Affective/Behavioral Skills	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to establish professional relationships and maintain professional accountability in the legal and ethical realm. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act ethically and responsibly. Demonstrate compassion in client care. Demonstrate mature and therapeutic relationships with clients. Assume accountability for all actions.
IV-C. Punctuality/Work Habits	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to complete pre-entry, classroom, laboratory, simulation and clinical assignments at the required time. Ability to adhere to classroom, laboratory, simulation and clinical schedules. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submits required pre-entry/acceptance documentation, health and preclinical assignments, work, documentation and/or other requirements punctually. Arrives to class, lab, simulation and/or clinical punctually. Performs skills in lab and clinical in a timely manner. Completes assignments by due date and time.
IV-D. Ethical Comportment	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a personal sense of integrity. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truthful charting. Truthful reporting. Refrain from unethical activities. Refrain from illegal activities. Advocate for patient, family, and/or community
V. 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 these intellectual abilities. In addition, students must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationship of structure.	
V-A. Reading	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and understand written/typed/printed documents in English 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and understand College and/or program policies and procedures. Read and understand information in patient charts. Comprehend standard nursing and medical terminology. Read and understand English printed documents (e.g., policies, protocols, standards of care) Read measurement marks
V-B. Arithmetic Competence	
<p>Essential Functions</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.) Accurately add, subtract, multiply, and/or divide whole numbers Compute fractions (e.g., medication dosages) Document numbers, measurements, and symbols. Use a calculator Document findings in records Document findings in records Accurately read and understand digital, analog, and waveform tools. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <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 Write/type numbers and symbols on hard files. Type numbers and symbols in electronic files Accurately measure objects regarding length, width, height, weight, etc. Compute drug dosages, rates of delivery, etc. Convert numbers to and from the metric system. Measure duration of time. Obtain and interpret information from a flow chart/graph and derive meaning. Obtain and interpret information from a digital display.

V-C. Analytical Thinking	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer knowledge from one situation to another • Process information • Evaluate outcomes • Problem-solve • Prioritize tasks • Use short- and long-term memory 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek supervision and consultation in a timely manner • Create and prioritize plan of care • Handle multiple tasks and problem solve simultaneously such as taking vital signs and recording them accurately • Assimilate and apply knowledge acquired from multiple learning experiences such as practicing skills and then applying them in the clinical setting
V-D. Critical Thinking	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cause-effect relationships • Plan/control activities for others • Synthesize knowledge and skills • Sequence information 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze assessment data in determining nursing diagnoses • Prioritize tasks
V-E. Knowledge Acquisition and Recall	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to acquire fundamental knowledge. • Ability to recall pertinent information within a time frame that assures patient safety. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study, understand, and retain new academic information. • Electronic media literacy. • Collect information on appropriate clinical assessment indicators. • Listen to shift report or read patient chart and recall pertinent facts related to patient care as needed. • Listen to shift report or read patient chart and recall pertinent facts related to required tasks as needed. • Recall verbal or written directions related to sequential tasks to be performed.
V-F. Data Analysis and Interpretation	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to accurately process information within a time frame that assures patient safety. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly identify normal and abnormal assessment findings. • Relate findings to potential causes and consequences.
V-G. Integrating Knowledge to Establish Clinical Judgment	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound judgment in planning based on appropriate data collection and interpretation. • Ability to transfer information from one situation to another. • Ability to prioritize and sequence tasks. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine appropriate actions based on evidence. • Appropriately respond to rapidly changing patient conditions within a safe time period. • See commonalities between two different patients or patient populations to assist with problem solving. • Complete work tasks in logical and time appropriate manner.
V-H. Evaluation	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use cause and effect reasoning. • Apply effective problem-solving methods to revise plans when untoward responses occur. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurately determines patient responses to nursing interventions. • Update nursing care plan following evaluation of patient response.
V-I. Time Orientation	
<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain an appropriate time schedule. 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive to class, lab, simulation, clinical, appointments, meetings, and other commitments on time. • Distribute medications on time. • Send patients to procedures on time.

VI. Essential Emotional Coping Skills: 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.

VI-A. Interpersonal Skills

<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build functional working relationships (rapport) with clients/patients. • Respect differences in clients • Build functional working relationships (rapport) with colleagues • Negotiate/manage interpersonal conflict 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish working rapport with patients. • Establish emotional boundaries between self and patient. • Provide emotional support to patient or family member. • Exhibit a caring, sensitive, and respectful attitude. • Establish working rapport with peers/co-workers • Function as a contributing and effective member of the health care team. • 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
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VI-B. Emotional Stability

<p>Essential Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work effectively within complex systems. • Maintain personal emotional balance. Establish therapeutic boundaries • Provide client with emotion support • Adapt to changing environments/stress • Deal with the unexpected (e.g., crisis) • Focus attention on tasks • Monitor own emotions • Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently • Handle strong emotions (e.g., uncertainty, grief) 	<p>Clinical Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt to rapidly changing situations. • Remain focused on tasks in a noisy or busy environment. • Able to multitask. • Remain calm during high-stress situations. • Effectively manage personally challenging experiences of shock, grief, anger, frustration, etc. • Function effectively in environments inherent with uncertainty. • 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)
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