

**OLD DOMINION SCHOOL OF NURSING**  
**Essential Technical Standards and Performance Requirements for Admission,  
Progression and Graduation**

**Overview**

The goal of the School of Nursing's programs is to prepare exceptional nurses who think critically, and practice nursing competently and compassionately in rapidly changing practice environments. All efforts are designed to build nursing knowledge, enhance nursing practice and patient safety, foster professional integrity, and ultimately improve the health outcomes of patients, families, communities and global environments across the continuum of care. Old Dominion University School of Nursing is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation.

The School of Nursing curricula require students to engage in diverse, complex and specific experiences essential to the acquisition and practice of essential nursing skills and functions. A unique combination of cognitive, affective, psychomotor, physical, and social abilities is required to satisfactorily perform these functions. In addition, specific functional abilities are essential for the delivery of safe, effective nursing care during clinical training activities. Therefore, the faculty has determined that particular technical standards are requisite for admission, progression, and graduation from the nursing programs.

In addition to classroom learning, the clinical learning that occurs throughout the respective programs involves certain considerations (such as patient safety, preceptor experiences and clinical facilities) that are not relevant to classroom accommodations. The School has established technical standards, based in part on the Quality and Safety Education for Nurses Competencies (Cronenwett, L. et. al., (2007). Quality and safety education for nurses. *Nursing Outlook*, 55, 122-131. /doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2007.02.006), in an effort to provide a framework to balance several competing interests:

- The rights of applicants and students.
- The safety of students, their co-workers and patients.
- The significant clinical component of the School curricula.
- The requirements imposed on the School by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the accrediting body, and by clinical agency agreements that allow the School to place students in various health care organizations for clinical education.
- The requirements of clinical facilities.
- 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.

For this reason, any applicant or student who seeks accommodations prior to or immediately after enrolling in the nursing programs must also request an assessment of the types of reasonable accommodations needed for the clinical component of the program and work with the Office of Educational Accessibility. Old Dominion University School of Nursing will make appropriate academic adjustments to facilitate enrollment and participation of qualified individuals with temporary or permanent disabilities.

An individual must be able to independently, with or without reasonable accommodation, meet the following technical standards of general abilities and those specifically related to (1) observation; (2) communication; (3) senses; (4) motor; (5) intellectual-conceptual, integrated and quantitative abilities; and (6) essential behavioral, interpersonal and social attributes. Individuals seeking admission to graduate nursing programs should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner ***without a trained intermediary***. The use of a trained intermediary means that a candidate's judgment or performance must be mediated by someone else's power of selection, observation, or performance. Individuals unable to meet these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, will not be able to complete the program and are counseled to pursue alternate careers.

### **Observation Competencies**

The Technical Standards include the ability to accurately process visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory information in a meaningful way. Observation of patients often occurs in the midst of competing sensory stimuli; therefore, the student must be able to attend to and process stimuli appropriately, selectively, and quickly in spite of competing stimuli.

Examples of observation competencies include, without limitation, the ability to:

- Accurately observe a patient during the course of a comprehensive or focused health assessment and interventions; obtain diagnostic specimens and information from digital, analog and waveform representations of physiologic phenomena observe and interpret a patient's heart and body sounds, body language, color of wounds, drainage, urine, feces, expectoration, and sensitivity to heat, cold, pain, and pressure to determine a client's condition.
- Observe the patient accurately, at a distance or close at hand, and observe and appropriately interpret non-verbal communication when performing nursing assessment and intervention or administering medications.

- Gather data from written and electronic reference materials, oral presentations, demonstrations and observations of a patient and the patient's environment.

## **Communication Competencies**

The Technical Standards include the ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with students, faculty, staff, patients/clients, family and other professionals.

Examples of communication competencies include, without limitation, the ability to:

- Communicate clearly and intelligibly in English (or to a patient language interpreter if the patient and/or family members/significant others do not speak English) in oral, written and electronic forms in a professional and sensitive manner with patients and their family members/significant others, health team members, faculty, and peers of diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds in professional nursing practice settings as well as in the academic setting.
- Read and write in the English language at a level sufficient to retrieve information from literature, computerized data bases and lectures.
- Process and communicate information on the patient's status with accuracy in a timely manner to members of the health care team.
- Make correct judgments regarding patient care, seeking supervision and consultation in a timely manner when indicated.
- Use and comprehend standard professional nursing and medical terminology when using and/or documenting a patient's print or electronic health record.
- Demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback.
- Convey appropriate information to patients and the health care team and teach, direct and counsel a wide variety of individuals, including explaining treatment procedures and initiating health education.
- Perceive, interpret and respond to non-verbal communication. This would include (but is not limited to) patients' emotional status, such as sadness, worry, agitation; mental status, including comprehension; and physical activity, gestures, and posture.
- Provide in-depth rationale for plans of care for individuals and groups.
- Communicate in a mature, professional, culturally sensitive, therapeutic, accurate and effective manner with patients, patients' family members/significant others, members of the health care team, faculty, staff, and peers.

## **Senses Competencies**

The Technical Standard includes the ability to use the senses of vision, touch, hearing, and smell so that data received by the senses may be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner.

Examples of this competency include, without limitation, the ability to:

- Hear and interpret people's communication in a noisy environment and correctly interpret what is heard; i.e., physicians' orders (verbal or over telephone), patient complaints, physical assessment (especially heart and other body sounds), fire and equipment alarms, and when unable to see lips such as when masks are used.
- Perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, vibration, and movement that are important to the ability to gather significant information needed to effectively evaluate patients.
- Utilize visual skills necessary to detect signs and symptoms, body language of patients, color of wounds, drainage and possible infections as well as colors associated with various health care alerting systems.
- Interpret the written word and read characters and identify colors on the computer screen accurately.
- Recognize through touch differences in size and shapes, surface characteristics, as well as palpable changes in various organs and tissues.
- Detect odors from the client (i.e. foul smelling drainage, alcohol or fruity breath, abnormal odors from body fluids, etc.), smoke, and gases or noxious smells.
- Gather data from written reference materials, oral presentations, demonstrations, simulations and observations of a patient and his/her environments.

## **Motor Competencies**

The Technical Standards include sufficient motor ability to execute movements required to perform or assist with nursing interventions, to provide comprehensive general nursing care and treatment in connection with other identified professional nursing student competencies in all health care settings.

Examples of motor competencies include, without limitation, the ability to:

- Demonstrate the psychomotor skills reasonably needed to perform or assist with procedures, treatments, administration of medication, management and operation of diagnostic and therapeutic medical

equipment and administering basic life support (BLS), and/or the specialty's scope of practice as defined by the relevant accrediting organization, depending upon the nursing student's respective program.

- Perform motor activities such as walking, lifting patients, bending, flexing, twisting, kneeling, pulling, stretching, pushing, carrying, reaching, typing, writing, gripping, squatting, standing and sitting actions repeatedly during clinical experiences that may last up to twelve hours in duration. Ability to frequently lift, carry or move objects weighing up to 60 pounds. Must be able to assist with patient positioning, transferring, or transporting, which requires lifting in excess of 40 pounds.
- Perform gross and fine motor movements with sufficient coordination to perform comprehensive physical examinations utilizing the techniques of inspection, palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic maneuvers that monitor or assess physiological phenomena or data.
- Utilize fine and gross muscular movements to treat patients in emergency situations. Emergency situations include any circumstance requiring an immediate intervention.
- Navigate patients' rooms and or homes, work spaces, and treatment areas with appropriate precision and speed to carry out the nursing process during the delivery of general nursing care or, in emergency situations, without hindering the ability of other members of the health care team to provide prompt treatment and care to patients.
- Possess sufficient levels of neuromuscular control and eye-to-hand coordination, as well as possess the physical and mental stamina, to meet the demands associated with extended periods of sitting, standing, moving, and physical exertion required for satisfactory and safe performance in the clinical and classroom settings, including performing CPR, if necessary.
- The Graduate Nurse Anesthesia Student should be able to:
  - Execute motor activities reasonably required to provide general care, to perform direct laryngoscopy, arterial and venous line placement, and performance of peripheral and central nerve blocks, anesthesia gas machine operation and troubleshooting, to provide emergency and urgent treatment to patients such as fiberoptic intubation and therapies of the difficult airway algorithm, and stand and sit for long periods of time.
  - Participate in clinical internship with several mandatory rotations requiring extended hours, with start times as early as 5:00 am. Evening, on-call and weekend shifts are common; students must be able to physically and psychologically perform capably and competently beyond a 12-hour shift.

## **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Competencies**

The Technical Standards include the ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize in the context of nursing study in connection with the other identified professional nursing student competencies. Examples of intellectual-conceptual competencies include, without limitation, the ability to:

- Quickly read and comprehend extensive written material and electronic data as well as evaluate and apply information and engage in critical thinking in the classroom, laboratory and clinical setting.
- Rapidly problem solve various situations after considering alternatives; independently assess and interpret health care data and make decisions for managing or intervening in the care of a patient to formulate a logical plan of care. The process of problem-solving involves the abilities to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize objective and subjective data, and to make decisions, often in a time urgent environment, that reflect consistent and thoughtful deliberation and sound clinical judgment.
- Process and understand information, comprehend three-dimensional relationships, and retain and recall pertinent information in a timely fashion, demonstrating the ability to establish a plan of care, set priorities, and make decisions reflecting consistent and thoughtful analysis of appropriate information.
- Demonstrate the ability to incorporate new information from peers, faculty, and the nursing and health care literature to formulate sound judgment in patient assessment, intervention, evaluation, teaching, and setting short and long term goals.
- Retrieve and critically appraise patient-related research to determine the best available research evidence (quantitative and qualitative) to use in a patient's nursing plan of care to promote positive patient outcomes.
- Accurately follow course syllabi, assignment directions, patient protocols, and any action plan(s) developed by deans, faculty, administrators, or health care agency staff.
- Precisely measure, calculate, reason, analyze and synthesize medication/solution dosages and any other essential information specific to patient care in a timely manner.
- The graduate nursing student must be able to, with or without the use of assistive devices, but without reliance on another person, interpret x-ray and other graphic images and digital or analog representations of physiologic phenomenon (such as EKGs).

## **Essential Behavioral, Interpersonal and Social Competencies**

The Technical Standards include the ability to demonstrate behavioral and social attributes in academic and in on-campus clinical (simulation) and off-campus clinical settings in alignment with professional nursing student competencies stipulated in the AACN's Essentials of Baccalaureate, Master's and Doctoral Education for Professional Nursing Practice, National Student Nurses' Association, Inc.® Code of Ethics: Part II Code of Academic and Clinical Conduct and Interpretive Statements and or the American Nurses Association Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements.

Examples of behavioral and social attributes competencies include, without limitation, the ability to:

- Conform to all requirements set forth by ODU/health care agency affiliation agreements as well as any additional requirements of any clinical setting. In addition, must be able to uphold professional nursing standards related to the student's scope of practice.
- Function effectively under physically taxing workloads, and in times of physical and mental stress, and able to provide safe nursing care work within environments with multiple interruptions and noises, distractions, and unexpected patient needs.
- Adapt to ever-changing environments by displaying flexibility and composure, and function effectively during uncertain and stressful situations inherent in clinical situations involving diverse clients and families.
- Interact effectively in the clinical setting with other members of the healthcare team; and function cooperatively and efficiently in the face of the uncertainties inherent in clinical practice.
- Receive and integrate constructive criticism regarding performance and respond with appropriate modification of behavior.
- Compassionately and professionally provide sensitive care for patients and families whose values, beliefs or practices differ from their own.
- Conform to ODU's attendance and clinical dress code/professional appearance requirements for on-campus clinical simulation and off-campus clinical learning sessions.
- Exercise stable, sound judgment in completing assessment and interventional activities.
- Establish rapport and maintain appropriate professional relationships with patients, patients' family members/significant others, peers, groups, faculty, staff, and other health care professionals from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds.
- Work cooperatively and with honesty and professional integrity at all times with peers, faculty, and members of the healthcare team.

- Demonstrate effective conflict resolution strategies in the University, the classroom, in on-campus clinical simulation, and off-campus clinical experiences.
- Correctly assess when a nursing intervention requires additional assistance and use good judgment in seeking help from the faculty, preceptor, or appropriate agency health care team members.
- Employ the skills required for full utilization of the student's intellectual abilities and the prompt completion of all responsibilities in the classroom and clinical settings.