

Performance Standards for Entry Level Nursing Programs

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) at Metropolitan State University has a responsibility to educate professionally competent nurses who provide evidence-based holistic nursing care to individuals, families, and/or communities using critical judgment, ethical reasoning, broad based knowledge, and technical skills. These abilities comprise performance standards for entry-level professional nursing practice.

These performance standards reflect a variety of cognitive, psychosocial, and motor skills required for successful student learning in the science and art of nursing. These performance standards are not required for entry into the nursing program. Individuals interested in applying for admission to an entry-level nursing program at the CNHS should review these performance standards to understand the abilities and behavioral characteristics required to successfully complete the programs.

Essential performance standards for nursing students include having the ability and skill to (1) acquire and utilize evidence-based knowledge; (2) develop skills to effectively communicate with patients/clients, co-workers, and the interdisciplinary team; (3) assess patient/client levels of illness and health in a variety of clinical settings; (4) interpret and utilize both primary and secondary data; (5) integrate knowledge to establish clinical judgment in order to provide evidence-based holistic nursing care; develop and implement holistic nursing interventions and plans of care; (6) provide safe humane nursing practice in a variety of settings using multiple healthcare technologies; (7) demonstrate ethical decision making; and, (8) professional nursing behaviors.

These performance standards are consistent with the program outcomes of the Prelicensure BSN Program at Metro State University.

These performance standards are compatible with the scope of practice as defined by the Minnesota State Board of Nursing. <https://mn.gov/boards/nursing/>

The examples show how a standard may be applied in entry level nursing education programs. The examples listed are for illustrative purposes only, and not intended to be a complete list of all tasks in an entry level nursing program.

Reasonable accommodations to meet standards may be available for otherwise program-qualified individuals with disabilities. For information about disability services contact the Center for Accessibility Resources at 651.793.1549 or <https://www.metrostate.edu/accessibility>

INTELLECTUAL		
Capability	Standard	Examples
Cognitive Perception	The ability to perceive events realistically, to think, clearly and rationally, and to function appropriately in routine and stressful situations. Students must be able to independently and accurately assess or contribute to the assessment of a client.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize multiple nursing activities in a variety of situations
<p>Critical Thinking – Careful thought, reasoned judgment. Differentiated from personal opinion and superficial (American Nurses Association, 2024, https://www.nursingworld.org/content-hub/resources/nursing-leadership/critical-thinking-nursing/ memorization of facts by the ability to obtain and use an appropriate quantity and quality of data for a given situation. Critical thinkers question assumptions, routines, and rituals, https://www.nursingworld.org/content-hub/resources/nursing-leadership/critical-thinking-nursing/ reconsider “known facts” when new information becomes available and develop new “rules” when old ones fail or are unavailable.</p>	<p>Critical thinking skills demanded of nurses require the ability to learn and reason: to integrate, analyze and synthesize data concurrently. Students must be able to solve problems rapidly, consider alternatives and make a decision for managing or intervening in the care of a client</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make effective decisions in the classroom and in clinical sites. • Develop/contribute to nursing care plans that accurately reflect client concerns. • Make decisions reflective of classroom learning in the clinical sites.

MOTOR SKILLS		
Capability	Standard	Examples
Motor Skills	Ambulatory capability sufficient to maintain a center of gravity when met with an opposing force as in lifting, supporting, and/or transferring a client.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position clients • Reach, manipulate, and operate equipment, instruments, and supplies e.g., syringes, sterile equipment, monitors • Perform/use electronic documentation • Lift, carry, push, and pull • Perform CPR
Mobility	Ambulatory capability sufficient to maintain a center of gravity when met with an opposing force as in lifting, supporting, and/or transferring a client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propel wheelchairs, stretchers, etc., alone or with assistance as available • Transport supplies to client room • Work around bedside with other personnel • Lift a minimum weight of 30 pounds • Move and lift clients in and out of bed, wheelchair, or cart • Assist with transfer and walking of patients who may require substantial support
Activity Tolerance	Ability to tolerate lengthy periods of physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move quickly and/or continuously • Tolerate long periods of standing and/or sitting

COMMUNICATIONS		
Capability	Standard	Examples
Communication	Communicate in English with others in oral and written form. Able to communicate with clients and members of the health care team in order to plan and deliver safe care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize oral and written communication skills sufficiently for teaching/learning and for interaction with others • Read, understand, write, and speak English • Explain treatment procedures • Initiate and/or reinforce health teaching • Document client responses • Clarify communications received
<p>Interpersonal Relationships</p> <p>I think we need to include the importance of building trusting and caring relationships through honesty, respect, integrate and being consistent in word and deed. Or something like that</p>	Interact with clients, families, staff, peers, instructors, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rapport with clients, families, and colleagues • Respond in a professional/therapeutic manner to a variety of client expressions and behaviors

SENSES		
Capability	Standard	Examples
Hearing	Auditory ability sufficient to hear normal conversation and/or assess health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor alarms, emergency signals, auscultatory sounds e.g., B/P, heart, lung, and bowel sounds, and cries for help, telephone -interactions/ dictation • Communicates with clients, families, and colleagues
Vision	Visual ability sufficient for observation, assessment, and performance of safe nursing care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe client responses • Discriminate color changes • Read measurement on client-related equipment • Read medication label • Read syringe accurately • Evaluate for a safe environment, client expressions and behaviors
Tactile	Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment, inclusive of size, shape, temperature, and texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform palpation e.g., pulse • Perform functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention, e.g., insertion of a catheter

PSYCHOSOCIAL		
Capability	Standard	Examples
Psychosocial Behaviors	Possess the emotional health required for full use of intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt and safe completion of all responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate professional abilities of trustworthiness, empathy, integrity, confidentiality, and unconditional acceptance. • Display flexibility • Function in the face of uncertainty and stressful situations

ENVIRONMENTAL		
Capability	Standard	Examples
Environmental Adaptability	Ability to tolerate environmental stressors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with chemicals and detergents • Tolerate exposure to odors • Work in close proximity to others • Work in areas of potential physical violence • Work with infectious agents and blood-borne pathogens. • Work in environments that may have allergens, such as latex.

A task force of representatives from nursing education in Minnesota developed these performance standards titled *Technical Standards*. Educational institutions represented were Bemidji State University, The College of St. Scholastica, Lake Superior College, Itasca Community College, Rainy River Community College, Mesabi Range Community and Technical College, Hibbing Community College, and Riverland Community and Technical College. Adaptations were made from the Core Performance Standards of the University of Arizona, Minnesota West Practical Nursing Program, and Iowa Community Colleges.