

Baker School of Nursing

FUNCTIONAL ABILITIES

Baker University School of Nursing in conjunction with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing statements on performance standards has specified essential functional abilities (technical standards).

Nursing is a practice discipline with cognitive, affective, sensory, and psychomotor performance requirements. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing recommends that students have certain abilities to be successful in nursing education and nursing practice. These functional abilities are consistent with the skills required of students and licensed nurses.

The following standards have been developed as a guideline for requisite skills for safe nursing practice:

Auditory: The student must have the ability to monitor and assess healthcare needs of patients they care for. This includes (but is not limited to) the ability to:

- Hear and interpret information the patient/family/team member is verbally communicating.
- Accurately hear auscultatory sounds on patient exam.
- Hear auditory sounds/alarm from technical equipment.
- Communicate over the telephone.

Visual Ability: A student must possess the visual ability to adequately observe and assess during the delivery of patient care. This includes (but is not limited to) the ability to:

- Observe wounds, dressings, and skin conditions.
- Note fluid levels within IV lines, syringes, collection and infusion devices.
- Read gauges--manometers, monitors, Extraventricular drains, B/P, scales, etc.
- Assessment of patient movement.
- Observation of patient behavior.
- Discriminate depth and color perception.

Tactile Ability: A student must possess tactile ability sufficient to perform a physical assessment of a patient and to perform procedures necessary for nursing care. This includes (but is not limited to) the ability to:

- Palpate, percuss, and perform other tactile skills required in physical exam of the patient.
- Assess texture, size, temperature, and vibration on physical exam.
- Discriminate between sharp/dull and hot/cold.

Olfactory Ability (Sense of Smell): A student should possess the sense of smell acute enough to detect strong odors that may indicate a change in patient condition. This includes (but is not limited to) the ability to:

- A purulent wound.
- Ketone breath.
- Body fluid with strong odors.
- Smoke or other odors indicating environmental danger.

Communication: The student must have the ability to communicate in English effectively and sensitively with patients, family members, as well as members of the healthcare team. This includes receptive and expressive modes of verbal, nonverbal, and written communication. This includes (but is not limited to) the ability to:

- Explain treatment procedures and the plan of care in an understandable manner.
- Complete healthcare teaching in an understandable manner.
- Document nursing assessments, interventions, and evaluate outcomes.
- Read patient related documentation as well as supporting medical/nursing literature.
- Give an intelligible verbal report of patient condition to other healthcare professionals.

Motor Function: A student must have the strength and coordination to perform both fine and gross motor tasks required for safe patient care. This includes (but is not limited to) the ability to:

- Manipulate diagnostic instruments.
- Perform CPR/foreign body removal.
- Perform interventions such as catheter insertion, dressing changes, and administration of medications.
- Collect patient specimens.
- Administer medications by oral, SQ, IM, and IV routes.
- Manipulate technical equipment including that required for life support.
- Apply pressure to contain bleeding.
- Perform treatment and procedures.
- Navigate stairs.
- Calibrate and set technical equipment.
- Work in a standing or squatting position.
- Perform frequent walking for up to 12 hours.
- Lift/transfer patients up to six inches from a stooped position.
- Push/pull weight of patient up to three feet.
- Lift and transfer a patient from a stooped position to an upright position to accomplish bed to chair transfer.

Cognitive Ability: A student must possess the cognitive ability to consistently and dependably engage in critical thinking. This includes (but is not limited to) the ability to:

- Exercise sound clinical judgment in a timely manner.
- Safely prioritize actions based on patient needs.
- Accurately perform required calculations.
- Accurately interpret data to determine necessary action.

Affective/Behavioral Ability: A student must possess the ability to establish professional relationships and maintain professional accountability in the legal and ethical realm. This includes (but is not limited to) the ability to:

- Act ethically and responsibly.
- Demonstrate compassion in patient care.
- Demonstrate mature and therapeutic relationships with patients, faculty, peers, and staff.
- Assume accountability for all actions.
- Demonstrates professional and appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior in all settings.

ADA Statement:

The Baker University Nursing Program will not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, religion, age, national origin, handicap or disability (unrelated to occupational or curricular requirements, veteran status, or any other classification protected by local, state and/or federal laws).

Students must first document their disability with the Student Services Office and determine if they meet requirements for protection under the ADA. Nursing faculty will be informed of the reasonable accommodations required by the student. Reasonable accommodations do not alter the fundamental, essential and academic requirements of the program. Each nursing course may require different accommodations; therefore, discussions should continue throughout the curriculum as needed.