

Statement of Personal Attributes and Capabilities Necessary for Admission to, Progression through and Graduation from the School of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania

The curricula leading to degrees in nursing require students to engage in diverse and complex experiences directed to the practice, refinement and full acquisition of essential nursing competencies and functions. Unique combinations of cognitive, behavioral, sensory, communication, psychomotor, and communication abilities are required to perform these functions in a satisfactory manner and to consistently demonstrate these competencies. In addition to being essential to the successful completion of the requirements for the respective nursing degree, these competencies and functions are necessary to ensure the health and safety of patients, fellow students, faculty and other health care providers. This statement describes the minimum competencies and functions necessary for entrance to, continuation in, and graduation from the nursing degree programs of the School of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania. Candidates for nursing degrees must be able to meet these minimum standards with or without reasonable accommodation.

Candidates for degrees offered by the School of Nursing must exhibit all the following competencies and characteristics:

Behavioral Characteristics:

- Fully use his/her intellectual ability, exercise good judgment and promptly and accurately complete all responsibilities attendant to implementing an appropriate plan of care for patients across the life span.
- Develop a compassionate, effective, professional and therapeutic relationship with patients.
- Work constructively in stressful and changing environments with the ability to modify behavior in response to evolving events.
- Demonstrate ethical behavior, including adherence to the Nurse Practice Act, the ANA Scope and Standards of Practice and the University Code of Academic Integrity.
- Demonstrate emotional and interpersonal skills sufficient to:
 - adapt to changing environments.
 - function efficiently and effectively in conditions of uncertainty inherent in the clinical problems exhibited by patients.
 - remain calm in an emergency situation.
 - function effectively and efficiently in times of physical and mental stress for short and/or for extended periods.
 - be aware of one's emotional responses and biases.

Communication Characteristics:

- Interrelate with colleagues, faculty, staff, patients and other professionals with honesty, sensitivity, integrity, respect and without bias.
- Communicate effectively with patients and families of diverse religious, cultural and/or social backgrounds.
- Express own ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback.
- Communicate effectively in oral and written forms in person and/or when using telephonic devices.
- Perceive and interpret non-verbal communication and verbal cues.
- Recognize and appropriately respond to emotions.
- Demonstrate the following communication abilities: speech, hearing, reading, writing, and electronic modality literacy.
- Demonstrate skills/ability sufficient to:
 - Elicit and record relevant information about health history, current health status or responses to treatment from patients, family members, or others.
 - Convey information to patient, members of the healthcare team and others as necessary to teach, direct, and counsel individuals and groups.
 - Give verbal directions to or follow verbal directions from other members of the health care team and participate in health care team discussions/coordination of patient care.
 - Process and communicate information of the patient's status with accuracy in a timely manner to members of the healthcare team.

Psychomotor Abilities

- Possess sufficient proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibration), physical strength and mobility to carry out nursing procedures, to conduct laboratory and diagnostic tests, and carry out physical examinations.
- Possess the motor skills required for their specialty's scope of practice, as defined by the relevant accrediting organization(s).
- Possess sufficient motor function to be able to demonstrate manual dexterity in order to coordinate fine and gross muscular movements sufficient to provide safe general care and treatment to patients in all areas of healthcare.
- Demonstrate an appropriate and timely response in emergency situations, including any circumstance requiring immediate and rapid resolution.

- Demonstrate physical abilities sufficient for carrying equipment, pushing, pulling, stooping, kneeling, bending, climbing stairs and moving within the confines of care delivery settings such as the patient room and the operating room and between settings such as clinic, classroom building and hospital.
- Demonstrate ability to lift, push and pull with assistance (mechanical or coworker) the weight of the average patient specific to the area of clinical work; and possess sufficient flexibility, balance, dexterity, hand-eye coordination, and stamina to deliver care and operate all related instruments and equipment.

Cognitive Characteristics:

- Demonstrate an aptitude for rapid problem solving, the capability to access and interpret medical files independently, evaluate physical examinations, and formulate a logical care plan in a timely manner.
- Demonstrate good judgment in patient assessment, and the abilities to utilize prior knowledge and incorporate new information in the decision-making process.
- Possess the ability to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and the relationships of structures as they pertain to practice decisions.
- Possess the necessary short and long-term memory function to retain and recall pertinent information (patient and other) in a timely fashion.
- Possess the ability to read and understand written documents in English and solve problems involving measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis and synthesis.
- Demonstrate the ability to gather, analyze and synthesize data, develop an appropriate plan of action, establish priorities, conceptualize plan of care, monitor treatment plans and modalities and provide in-depth rationale for plan of care both in quiet environments and in areas where distractions, noise, and other stressors are present.
- Demonstrate the ability to integrate and assimilate large volumes of information from multiple sources and multiple educational experiences in a timely fashion, and be able to apply that information to problem solving and decision making.

Sensory Characteristics:

- Ability to distinguish colors including the accurate interpretation of diagnostic tests, changes in skin color, nail beds, mucus membranes, bodily fluids and wound characteristics in all types of lighting conditions.
- Ability to recognize three dimensional and spatial relationships.
- Ability to discriminate physical examination findings using inspection, auscultation, percussion and palpation.
- Ability to discriminate between sizes, shapes, temperature, and texture by means of touch.

- Ability to discriminate changes in position, pressure, movement and vibrations in order to perform nursing procedures, conduct laboratory and diagnostic tests, and to perform the physical examination.
- Ability to distinguish odors that may be related to a patient's condition, noxious spills, or fumes from a fire explosion or malfunction of equipment.
- Ability to detect sounds related to bodily functions, monitoring devices, telephones and emergency signals.
- Ability to prepare and dispense the correct quantity of medication or therapeutic agents in a syringe or therapeutic device
- Possess sufficient visual acuity so as to be able to observe a patient's response at a distance and/or close at hand and to read lips when necessary.

Consistent with its mission and philosophy, the School of Nursing is committed to providing educational opportunities to students with disabilities. In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the School provides reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. However, the decision regarding appropriate accommodations will be based on the specifics of each case.

Students who seek reasonable accommodations for disabilities must contact the Office of Student Disabilities Services located at Stouffer Commons, Suite 300, 3702 Spruce Street, Philadelphia PA 19104-6027. The office hours are Monday through Friday, from 9:00am to 5:00pm. Phone: (215) 573-9235; TDD: (215) 746-6320; FAX: (215) 746-6326; E-mail: sdsmail@zimbra.upenn.edu. This office is responsible for assessing documentation and determining reasonable accommodations.

Questions concerning these standards can be directed to the Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Services [advisor@nursing.upenn.edu]

Approved December 2011