



SCHOOL OF NURSING POLICY

Policy Name: Student Essential Functions

Approval Authority: Rutgers School of Nursing Faculty

Responsible Executive: Senior Associate Dean for Administration and Student Services and Executive Vice Dean

Responsible Office: Department of Student Services Operations and Academic Administration

Adopted: 9/28/2015

- 1. Policy Statement:** The School of Nursing defines functions that are essential for student participation in educational programs at the School and the procedures to be followed in the event that a student does not meet those defined standards.
- 2. Who Should Read this Policy:** All School of Nursing students participating in educational programs.
- 3. Resources and Related Documents**
Office of Disabilities
<https://ods.rutgers.edu/contact-ods>
School of Nursing Disabilities Services
<http://nursing.rutgers.edu/students/disability.html>

4. Policy

There are requisite essential functions for the practice of nursing at the baccalaureate and graduate levels that must be achievable by students. These essential functions are set forth in writing to guide the School in its consideration of any student. The School of Nursing is required to provide reasonable accommodations to students who are qualified individuals with disabilities and who can, with or without reasonable accommodations, perform the essential functions required of nursing students.

Student Essential Functions are as follows:

1. Knowledge, skills and attitudes to function in diverse clinical settings and perform within their scope of practice;
2. Functional use of sensory and motor functions to permit them to carry out the activities in the areas listed;
3. Ability to consistently, quickly and accurately integrate all information received by whatever sense(s) employed and the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data;
4. Capability to perform in a reasonably independent manner. Clinical decision making and exercising clinical judgment are essential functions of the role of the student.

Baccalaureate and graduate students must have abilities and skills in the following five distinct areas:

1. **Observation:** Students ordinarily must have sufficient vision to be able to observe demonstrations and laboratory exercises in the basic sciences and nursing clinical areas. They must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and at close range.
2. **Communication:** Students ordinarily must be able to communicate with patients and colleagues. They should be able to hear but technological compensation is available and may be permitted for some disabilities in this area. Students must be able to read.
3. **Motor:** Students ordinarily should have sufficient motor function such that they are able to execute movements reasonably required to provide general care and emergency treatment to patients.

Examples of emergency treatment are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the application of pressure to stop bleeding and opening of an obstructed airway.

4. Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative: These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Problem solving and critical thinking are necessary. In addition, students should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures.
5. Behavioral and Social: Students must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment and evidence mature and sensitive relationships with patients. Students must be able to tolerate physically demanding workloads, adapt to changing environments, and display flexibility to function in rapidly changing clinical settings.

The practice of nursing at the baccalaureate and graduate levels must not pose a threat to the health and safety of the patients that it serves. School of Nursing students will act to protect the welfare of patients. On this basis, certain students may be unable to fulfill the essential functions of their program.

Although all reasonable accommodations, if requested, will be made for students they can be dismissed from the School of Nursing for physical and/or emotional challenges that prevent them from performing these essential functions.

Rutgers is committed to providing equal educational access for individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008. The School of Nursing will, if requested, provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified enrolled students unless: (a) such accommodations impose undue hardship to the institution; or (b) direct threats of substantial harm to health and safety of others due to the disability cannot be eliminated by any reasonable accommodations available that would allow the student to perform the essential functions; or (c) such accommodations fundamentally alter the educational program or academic standards.

5. Procedure

Students requesting accommodation(s) should make their needs known to the Rutgers Office of Disability Services or the School of Nursing Assistant Dean of Student Services and/or Program Director-Center for Academic Success as soon as possible after joining the School and before enrolling in classes where accommodations will be needed. This enables the School to plan appropriately. Documentation of disability is required as is a completed [Letter of Accommodations Form](#) or the [School of Nursing Disability Office Registration Form](#).

A student whose behavior or performance raises questions concerning his or her ability to fulfill the essential functions may be referred to the School of Nursing Assistant Dean of Student Services and/or Program Director-Center for Academic Success.