



Registered Nurses Association of Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Becoming a Registered Nurse in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Requisite Skills and Abilities

Introduction and Purpose

The population of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut expect to be cared for by health care professionals who provide safe, competent, ethical care and support, which is centered around clients and their families. The Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (RNANT/NU) is the professional association of which all registered nurses in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are members. The RNANT/NU sets the practice standards for entry into the profession of registered nursing in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Individuals who decide to pursue a career as a registered nurse must meet certain requirements for registration, including:

- successful completion of a recognized registered nurse program
- passing the Canadian Registered Nurse Examination
- demonstration of good character expected of a registered nurse
- competence and fitness to engage in the practice of nursing

Through education programs, nurses gain the theoretical and practical foundation to practice safely, competently, compassionately and ethically in diverse practice environments. These environments range from large urban to remote rural settings (e.g. hospitals, communities, homes, clinics, schools, residential facilities) in all domains of nursing: practice, research, education, and administration.

Nursing students need certain basic skills and abilities to attain the entry level competencies. These basic skills and abilities (Requisite Skills and Abilities [RSAs]) are all required for progression through a nursing education program. Informing prospective students of these program expectations should enhance their ability to decide if nursing is an appropriate career choice. This document has been designed to assist prospective nursing students, guidance counsellors, educational institutions, and the general public in understanding the demands necessary, and the required capacities needed for the practice of registered nursing.

Entry Level Competencies

Fundamental competencies are a reflection of today's education and ensure entry level registered nurses (RNs) will be able to function in the reality of the current health care system. These competencies ensure RNs are equipped with the knowledge, skills and abilities to adapt to changes in health care. These competencies must be met by all RNs regardless of the practice environment.

The conceptual framework, outlined in the RNANT/NU *Entry-Level Registered Nurse Competencies* (2009), is organized in five (5) categories:

- Professional Responsibility and Accountability
- Knowledge-based Practice
- Ethical Practice
- Service to the Public
- Self-regulation

Requisite Skills and Abilities and Human Rights

Undergraduate nursing programs must balance their obligations to uphold human rights¹ with the responsibility to ensure graduates of approved programs achieve entry-level competencies for safe, competent and ethical nursing practice. Anyone who questions whether they have the Requisite Skills and Abilities for admission and progression through a nursing education program, should contact the educational institution to which they intend to apply to determine if nursing is an appropriate career choice for them, and/or identify areas potentially requiring accommodation². This may require disclosure of the nature of disabilities and other relevant information, which must be treated in a confidential and non-discriminatory manner.

¹ *The Northwest Territories (2002) and Nunavut (2003) Human Rights Acts prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ancestry, nationality, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family status, family affiliation, political belief, political association, social condition and conviction for which as pardon has been granted.*

² *Accommodation means making changes to certain rules, standards, policies, workplace cultures and physical environments to ensure that a person is not discriminated against (Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission, 2007).*

Requisite Skills and Abilities (RSAs)

The RNANT/NU has identified seven categories of requisite skill and abilities as capturing the components necessary for nursing practice. These categories represent reasonable and justifiable skill and ability requirements for entry-level nursing practice in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. They are reflected in the competencies required for registered nurse practice.

Each requisite skill and ability is listed with examples of entry-level nursing activities that illustrate the skill and ability. The examples provided are not intended to be all-inclusive.

<p><u>Cognitive</u> Mental process of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Remember information from past experiences· Demonstrate problem-solving skills· Demonstrate concentration skills· Exercise critical inquiry skills to develop professional judgement· Apply critical thinking skills* and abilities to: Add, subtract, multiply, divide; Calculate ratios, percentages, and apply formulas	<p>Examples</p> <p>In administering a pain medication, critically analyzes client assessment data (observation of the client, recall from the past, recalls information from colleagues), chooses from possible interventions (amount of pain medication), calculates correct dosage, safely administers the medication, recognizes untoward effects and intervenes as necessary.</p>
<p><u>Communication</u> Imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, signs or non-verbal cues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Speak and understand spoken language of instruction well enough to avoid confusing words and meanings· Write and understand language of instruction well enough to avoid confusing words and meanings· Recognize own non-verbal signals and interpret those received from others while considering individual	<p>Examples</p> <p>Able to elicit and attend to information from a client during an assessment (both verbal and nonverbal communication) and communicate findings both verbally and in writing to other health care providers.</p>

differences in expression and associated meaning	
<p><u>Behavioural</u> Ability to conduct oneself in a professional manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Manage own behaviour well enough to provide safe, competent and ethical nursing care · Engage with self and others to create a safe environment · React appropriately to giving and receiving physical touch and working in close proximity with clients · Fulfill responsibility as part of a team · Manage time appropriately 	<p>Examples</p> <p>Sets priorities in the face of multiple demands; maintains a calm presence with clients regardless of clients' behaviour; works days, nights, weekends and holidays.</p>
<p><u>Interpersonal</u> Relationships existing or occurring between persons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop professional relationships and rapport with individuals and groups · Recognize the importance of maintaining interpersonal boundaries · Recognize the needs of clients and colleagues 	<p>Examples</p> <p>Supports a client during a painful procedure; recognizes and validates the importance of clients' perspectives and feelings; supports clients to make healthy choices.</p>

<p><u>Physical</u></p> <p>Relating to the body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Stand and maintain balance · Demonstrate manual dexterity · Move within limited spaces · Push and pull · Perform repetitive tasks · Perform complex sequences of hand-eye coordination · Bend · Reach · Lift · Walk · Climb · Carry objects 	<p>Examples</p> <p>Able to help lift, turn and/or transfer clients; climb stairs for a home care visit; enter information into a computer while taking client health history; remove sutures and staples; give injections.</p>
<p><u>Sensory Perception</u></p> <p>Relationship between organizing, interpreting and understanding stimulation of sensory receptors in the eyes, ears, nose and skin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sight · Touch and feel · Hearing · Smell 	<p>Examples</p> <p>See well enough to read numbers and lines of demarcation on a syringe; feel a pulse; perceive differences in temperature with hand touch; hear alarms on equipment and patient call systems; hear through a stethoscope to note heart rate and breath sounds; hear client's voice without looking directly at them; recognize abnormal odours; prepare and administer a medication for injection.</p>
<p><u>Environment</u></p> <p>Surrounding things, conditions, and influences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Noxious smells · Disease agents · Distractions · Noise · Chemicals · Unpredictable behaviour of others 	<p>Examples</p> <p>Tolerate unpleasant odors; deal with distraction of a crying baby while providing care to a sibling; recognize dangers in the practice environment; recognize potential exposure to infectious diseases, chemicals and allergens.</p>

*The term *critical inquiry skills* expands the meaning of critical thinking to encompass critical reflection on actions. Critical inquiry means a process of purposive thinking and reflective reasoning where practitioners examine ideas, assumptions, principles, conclusions, beliefs, and actions in the context of nursing practice (RNANT/NU, 2006).

Conclusion

Registered Nurses protect the public by providing safe, competent, ethical care. This is done by practicing within the accepted Standards of Practice as outlined by the professional associations. Acquiring the Entry Level Competencies through educational programs enables registered nurses to provide care according to these standards. Requisite skills and abilities enable the prospective nurse to acquire these competencies.

Anyone who questions whether they have the requisite skills and abilities should contact the educational institution they are applying to, or the RNANT/NU at www.rnantnu.ca for more information.

The *Entry-Level Registered Nurse Competencies* (2009) and *Standards of Nursing Practice for Registered Nurses* (2006) documents are available at www.rnantnu.ca.

References

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