



REGISTERED NURSES ASSOCIATION
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT

Becoming a Registered Nurse In the Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Requisite Skills and Abilities

The Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (RNANT/NU) regulates registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) to ensure the provision of safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical care in the interest of the public.

The purpose of this document is to inform potential nursing students, educators, and the public about the knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgement required of nursing students to successfully progress through a nursing education program and achieve the established entry-level competencies for RNs in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut (NU). The requisite skills and abilities services as a benchmark, outlining the requirements to meet the minimum standard necessary to ensure client safety and public protection.

Individuals considering a career as an RN or those advising someone about a career in nursing, may use this document to understand the requirements needed to become a nurse in the NWT or NU and/or determining their potential need for accommodation in a nursing education program. Upon completion of their nursing education program, all nursing students must demonstrate the ability to meet the RNANT/NU entry-level competencies.

Entry-level RNs must be able to practice in accordance with the RNANT/NU Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses. The standards of practice articulate the conduct and performance required of RNs. In the interest of client safety, certain skills and abilities are required to achieve entry-level competencies and gain initial entry to the nursing profession.

Requisite Skills and Abilities

Newly graduated RNs have the theoretical and practical knowledge to provide safe, competent, ethical, compassionate, and evidence-informed nursing care in any practice settings (NANB, 2019). They are prepared to provide individualized nursing care to people of all ages and genders across the spectrum of diversity, in situations related to health promotion, prevention, and population health; altered health status, including acute and chronic health conditions, and rehabilitative care; and, hospice, palliative, and end-of-life care. Newly graduated RNs are prepared as generalists to practice in diverse practice environments, ranging from large urban to remote rural settings (e.g., hospitals, communities, homes, clinics, schools, residential facilities) (Nova Scotia College of Nursing, 2019).

Individuals who decide to pursue a career in the profession of nursing need to meet certain formal requirements for registration with RNANT/NU, including but not limited to:

- successful completion of an approved RN education program;
- passing the entry-to-practice exam;
- demonstration of good character expected of a RN;
- competence and fitness to engage in the practice of nursing.

Categories of Requisite Skills and Abilities

The requisite skills and abilities are organized into seven categories with examples of entry-level RN practice. They are included to provide a snapshot of the nature and kinds of activities involved in typical entry-level RN practice. The seven categories of requisite skills and abilities are:

1. Cognitive
2. Behavioural
3. Communication
4. Interpersonal
5. Physical
6. Sensory perceptual
7. Environmental

Note: The examples are intended to mean “including but not limited to” the examples provided.

Cognitive

Requisite Skills and Abilities

Ability to perform skills that demonstrate thinking capacity, including:

- Recall information over time;
- Demonstrate concentration skills;
- Demonstrate problem-solving skills;
- Prioritize actions;
- Apply mathematical skills and abilities as follows:
 - Add, subtract, multiply and divide;
 - Calculate ratios, percentages.

Examples

When administering a pain medication, the entry-level RN:

- Critically analyzes client assessment data (observes the client, recalls information from the past, recalls information from colleagues);
- Chooses from appropriate interventions (amount of pain medication);
- Calculates correct medication dosage, safely administers the medication;
- Recognizes adverse effects and intervenes as necessary.

Communication

Requisite Skills and Abilities

Ability to express and receive written, verbal and non-verbal communication and the ability to interact with others in a clear, respectful, and professional manner:

- English language proficiency (reading, writing, listening, and speaking);
- Recognizing one's own non-verbal communication and the ability to interpret non-verbal communication by others while considering individual differences in expression and associated meaning;
- Ability to document and understand information, in writing as well as electronically, in the client's chart/health record.

Examples

The entry-level RN:

- Listens effectively to clients;
- Elicits and attends to information from clients while taking a health history;
- Communicates clearly and accurately with other health care team members about clients, and in a timely manner.

Behavioural

Requisite Skills and Abilities

Ability to conduct oneself in a professional manner:

- Manage own behaviour to provide safe, competent, ethical, and compassionate nursing care;
- Engage in self-reflection to improve care;
- Engage with others to create a safe environment;
- Respond calmly and respectfully in situations that are stressful and may involve conflict;
- React respectfully to giving and receiving physical touch and working in close proximity with a full range of clients;
- Fulfill responsibility as part of a team;
- Manage time appropriately.

Examples

The entry-level RN:

- Recognizes client priorities;
- Manages time and sets priorities in the face of multiple demands;
- Maintains calm presence with clients regardless of the client's behaviour and reflects on actions taken

Interpersonal

Requisite Skills and Abilities

Ability to establish professional relationships with other people:

- Develop therapeutic relationships and rapport with individuals and groups;
- Recognize the needs of clients and colleagues;
- Recognize the importance of maintaining boundaries in the therapeutic nurse-client relationship.

Examples

The entry-level RN:

- Provides appropriate support to a client during a painful procedure;
- Identifies that others have needs and perspective that may be different than one's own;
- Maintains professional boundaries with clients.

Physical

Requisite Skills and Abilities

Ability to perform each of the following requirements to participate in educational activities and provide client care:

- Stand and maintain balance;
- Have manual dexterity;
- Move within limited spaces;
- Push and pull;
- Perform repetitive movements;
- Perform complex tasks requiring hand-eye coordination;
- Bend and reach
- Life;
- Walk;
- Climb;
- Carry objects.

Examples

The entry-level RN:

- Provides CPR to a client;
- Assists a client to get out of bed and walk;
- Climbs stairs carrying supplies for a home visit;
- Helps life, turn, and/or transport clients;
- Prepares and administers injections;
- Changes a dressing on a wound and removes sutures.

Sensory

Requisite Skills and Abilities

Ability to perceive with each of the following senses to participate in education activities and provide care:

- Sight;
- Hearing;
- Touch;
- Smell.

Examples

The entry-level RN:

- Sees well enough to read numbers and lines of demarcation on a syringe;
- Feels a pulse;
- Perceives differences in temperature with hand touch;
- Hears client call systems and alarms on equipment;
- Hears through a stethoscope to note heart rate and breath sounds;
- Hears a client's voice without looking directly at the client;
- Recognizes abnormal odors.

Environmental

Requisite Skills and Abilities

Ability to function in the presence of each of the following commonly encountered and unavoidable environmental factors:

- Noxious smells;
- Disease agents;
- Chemicals;
- Distractions;
- Noise;
- Unpredictable behaviour of others

Examples

The entry-level RN:

- Maintains focus while distracted or interrupted in the middle of a procedure;
- Recognizes dangers in the client environment;
- Tolerates disposing of body waste (urine, feces, vomit);
- Tolerates unpleasant and foul odors.

Accommodation

All nursing students are required to successfully complete the nursing program and demonstrate achievement of established entry-level competencies prior to becoming a RN. All entry-level RNs must be able to practice in a safe, competent, ethical, and compassionate manner in accordance with the Standards of Practice for RNs.

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 achievable career choice for them and/or identify areas potentially requiring accommodation.

References

College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (2021) *Requisite Skills and Abilities for Becoming a Registered Nurse in Alberta*. Author.

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