



Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association

Becoming a Registered Nurse in Saskatchewan: Requisite Skills and Abilities

Introduction and Purpose

This document outlines the requisite skills and abilities to meet current RN Standards and Foundation Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses and for successful completion of a generalist nursing education program. The standards and foundation competencies are incorporated into the curriculum of nursing education programs. All basic nursing education programs in Saskatchewan are approved by the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association (SRNA). In addition to the completion of an approved nursing education program, students will need to pass the approved exam to be eligible for licensure and registration. This document has been designed to assist prospective nursing students, guidance counselors and educational institutions in understanding the demands necessary, and the required capacities needed, for the practice of registered nursing.

As defined in *The Registered Nurses Act* (1988) the “practice of registered nursing means the performance of co-ordination of health care services including but not limited to: observing and assessing the health status of clients and planning, implementing and evaluating nursing care; and the counseling, teaching, supervision, administration and research that is required to implement or complement health care services; for the purpose of promoting, maintaining or restoring health, preventing illness and alleviating suffering where the performance or co-ordination of those services requires the knowledge, skill or judgment of a person who qualifies for registration” (p. 2). The SRNA sets the standards to identify the level of performance expected of RNs and foundation competencies reflect the knowledge, skill and judgment of entry-level RNs. Together, the foundation competencies and standards outline the minimum expectations for RN practice in Saskatchewan.

Requisite Skills and Abilities (RSAs)

Entry into the practice of registered nursing is as a generalist. The SRNA believes the outlined requisite skills and abilities are foundational to being able to meet the standards and foundation competencies for practice and are necessary for all initial applicants.

The following seven categories of requisite skills and abilities are generally accepted for professional nursing practice in Canada:

Cognitive

1. Remember information over a brief period of time
2. Remember information from past experiences
3. Problem-solve to develop professional judgment
4. Reason to develop professional judgment
5. Exercise critical inquiry* skills to develop professional judgment
6. Apply mathematical skills and abilities in order to: add, subtract, multiply and divide, calculate ratios, percentages and apply algebraic equations

*This term expands the meaning of critical thinking to encompass critical reflection on actions. Critical inquiry means a process of purposeful thinking and reflective reasoning where practitioners examine ideas, assumptions, principles, conclusions, beliefs and actions in the context of nursing practice.

Examples: The student can make sense of complex knowledge, uses knowledge and theory appropriately and uses past experience to inform current decision making.

Behavioural

1. Manage own behaviour well enough to provide safe, competent and ethical nursing care
2. Engage with self and others to create a safe environment
3. Respond appropriately in situations that are stressful or that involve conflict
4. React appropriately to giving and receiving physical touch and working in close proximity with a full range of clients
5. Fulfill responsibility as part of a team
6. Manage time appropriately

Examples: The student remains calm in stressful situations, recognizes client priorities and responds appropriately in conflict situations. The student accepts responsibility for their own actions.

Communication

1. Speak and understand spoken English well enough to avoid mixing up words and meanings. This includes the ability to understand complex medical and technical knowledge
2. Write and understand written English well enough to avoid mixing up words and meanings

3. Recognize own non-verbal signals and interpret those received from others while considering individual differences in expression and associated meaning
4. Utilize computer and related technology

Examples:

- The student distinguishes that some words may be strikingly similar but have different meanings (i.e. medications).
- The student demonstrates awareness through their own non-verbal behavior that every individual's behavior has different meaning.
- The student listens appropriately to clients, and utilizes electronic health records, electronic databases and electronic devices such as monitors and pumps.

Interpersonal

1. Develop professional relationships and rapport with individuals and groups for the purpose of education, support and counseling
2. Recognize the needs of clients and colleagues, including those of other cultures, ethnicities, minorities and at-risk groups
3. Recognize the importance of maintaining interpersonal boundaries
4. Recognizes that others have needs and perspectives that might be different from their own
5. Works well with others and can collaborate with others from diverse backgrounds

Examples: The student recognizes the importance of maintaining interpersonal boundaries with clients, supports clients to make healthy choices, and recognizes the importance of client perspectives and feelings.

Physical

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

1. Stand and maintain balance
2. Manual dexterity
3. Move within limited spaces
4. Push and pull
5. Perform repetitive movements
6. Perform complex sequences of hand eye coordination
7. Bend
8. Reach
9. Lift

10. Walk
11. Climb
12. Carry objects

Examples: The student can carry a case weighing 8 kg up a flight of stairs, assist with transferring clients, give intramuscular injections and remove wound sutures.

Sensory Perceptual

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

1. Sight
2. Hearing
3. Touch
4. Smell

Examples: The student can accurately assess blood pressure and pulse, read the small print on medication packages and bottles, assess client colour, and perceive changes in odors of bodily fluids.

Environmental

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

1. Noxious smells
2. Disease agents
3. Distractions
4. Noise
5. Chemicals
6. Unpredictable behaviour in others
7. Unpredictable situations

Examples: The student can recognize dangers in the client environment, tolerate disposing of body waste, and tolerate unpleasant odors.

Individuals considering a career as an RN should review this document and assess their ability to meet the criteria. The requisite skills and abilities serve as a benchmark, outlining the requirements to meet the minimum standard necessary to ensure public safety. The SRNA supports an equitable process and recognized that the educational institution accommodation may assist a person in meeting the outlined criteria. "Accommodation is the process of making changes or adjustments that eliminate discriminatory barriers to equal participation and enjoyment of opportunities in employment, education, public services and other areas covered by the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*. Accommodation means focusing on inclusion and flexibility rather

than just one way of doing things” (Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, 2009, p.3). Prospective applicants with a disability are entitled to reasonable accommodation provided that accommodation does not compromise patient safety and wellbeing. “Accommodation does not require that post-secondary institutions lower academic or non-academic standards to accommodate students with disabilities [or] relieve the student of the responsibility to develop the essential skills and competencies expected of all students” (Alberta Human Rights Commission, 2010, p.3). This criteria does not preclude people with disabilities (defined by Section 2(d.1) of the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*). If the need for accommodation is anticipated, students should contact the educational institution where they are applying. Concerns regarding suitability may be made to the nursing education program where the prospective student intends to apply. Appeals of the decisions of educational institutions can be made to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

Conclusion

“Nursing education programs and regulatory bodies must balance their obligations to uphold individual rights with the requirement to ensure graduates of approved programs achieve entry-level competencies for safe, competent, compassionate and ethical nursing practice” (CRNNS, 2015, p.3).

Basic registered nursing education programs prepare graduates for a variety of roles and settings. Prospective students must possess a broad range of skills and abilities in order to be successful in the completion of an approved basic nursing program and initial registration and licensure.

References

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Updated March 2019
March 2011