

## Competency Standards for Nursing

### Gwynedd Mercy University for Admission, Academic Progression, and Graduation

The goal of the Frances M. Maguire College of Nursing and Health Professions is to prepare every Distinctive Mercy Nursing student to think ethically, critically, and practice nursing competently and compassionately in rapidly changing practice environments. All efforts are designed to facilitate knowledge, enhance nursing practice and patient safety, foster professional integrity, and ultimately improve the health outcomes of patients, families, and communities across the continuum of care. In addition, certain functional abilities are essential for the delivery of safe, effective, quality nursing care during clinical education activities. Therefore, the faculty has determined that certain competency standards are requisite for admission, progression, and graduation from the nursing programs.

In addition to classroom learning, clinical learning occurs throughout the program and involves considerations (such as patient safety and clinical facilities) that are not present for classroom accommodations. For this reason, any applicant or individual who seeks accommodations prior to or immediately after enrolling in the nursing programs must also request an assessment of the types of reasonable accommodations needed for the clinical education component of the program.

The individual must be able to independently, with or without reasonable accommodation, meet the following competency standards of general abilities and those specifically of (1) observation; (2) communication; (3) motor; (4) cognitive, conceptual, and quantitative abilities; (5) essential behavioral and social attributes; and (6) ability to manage stressful situations. Individuals unable to meet these competency standards, with or without reasonable accommodation, will not be able to complete the program and are counseled to pursue alternate careers.

**General abilities:** The individual is expected to possess functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing, and smell so that data received by the senses may be integrated, analyzed, and synthesized in a consistent and accurate manner. The individual must also possess the ability to perceive pain, pressure, temperature, position, vibration, and movement that are important to the student's ability to gather significant information needed to effectively evaluate patients. The individual must be able to respond promptly to urgent situations that may occur during clinical education activities and must not hinder the ability of other members of the health care team to provide prompt treatment and care to patients.

**Observation Ability:** The individual must have sufficient capacity to make accurate visual observations and interpret them in the context of laboratory studies, medication administration, and patient care activities. In addition, an individual must be able to document these observations and maintain accurate records.

**Communication Ability:** The individual must communicate effectively both verbally and non-verbally to elicit information and to translate that information to others. Each individual must have the ability to read, write, comprehend, and communicate effectively in the English language to facilitate communication with patients, their family members, and other professionals in the health care settings. In addition, the individual must be able to maintain accurate patient records, present information in a professional, logical manner and provide patient counseling and instruction to effectively care for patients and their families. The individual must possess verbal and written communication skills that permit effective communication with instructors and students in both the classroom and clinical settings.

**Motor Ability:** The individual must be able to perform gross and fine motor movements with sufficient coordination needed to perform complete physical examinations utilizing the techniques of inspection, palpation, percussion, auscultation, and other diagnostic maneuvers. The individual must develop the psychomotor skills reasonably needed to perform or assist with procedures, treatments, administration of medication, management and operation of diagnostic and therapeutic medical equipment, and such maneuvers to assist with patient care activities such as lifting, wheel chair guidance, and mobility. The individual must have sufficient levels of neuromuscular control and eye-to-hand coordination as well as possess the physical and mental stamina to meet the demands associated with extended periods of sitting, standing, moving, and physical exertion required for satisfactory and safe performance in the clinical and classroom settings including performing CPR, if necessary. The individual must possess the ability of manual dexterity that would be required for certain activities, such as drawing up solutions in syringe. The individual must be able to independently perform the detailed motor and fine activities without the use of assistive devices.

**Cognitive, Conceptual, and Quantitative Abilities:** The individual must be able to develop and refine problem-solving skills that are crucial to practice as a nurse. Problem-solving involves the abilities to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize objective and subjective data, and to make decisions, often in a time urgent environment, that reflect consistent and thoughtful deliberation and sound clinical judgment. Each individual must demonstrate mastery of these skills and possess the ability to incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and the nursing and medical literature to formulate sound clinical judgment in patient assessment, intervention, evaluation, teaching, and setting short and long term goals.

**Behavioral and Social Attributes:** Compassion, integrity, motivation, effective interpersonal skills, and concern for others are personal attributes required of those in the nursing programs. Personal comfort and acceptance of the role of a nurse functioning under supervision of a clinical instructor or preceptor is essential for a nursing student. The individual must possess the skills required for full utilization of the student's intellectual abilities; the exercise of good judgment; the prompt completion of all responsibilities in the classroom and clinical settings; and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and other members of the health care team. Each individual must be able to exercise stable, sound judgment and to complete assessment and interventional activities. The ability to establish rapport and maintain sensitive, interpersonal relationships with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds is critical for practice as a nurse. The individual must be able to adapt to changing environments; display flexibility; accept and integrate constructive criticism given in the classroom and clinical settings;

effectively interact in the clinical setting with other members of the healthcare team; and learn to function cooperatively and efficiently in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical practice.

**Ability to Manage Stressful Situations:** The individual must be able to adapt to and function effectively to stressful situations in both the classroom and clinical settings, including emergency situations. The individual will encounter multiple stressors while in the nursing programs. These stressors may be (but are not limited to) personal, patient care/family, faculty/peer, and or program related.

Students should review the Competency Standards for the Nursing program carefully and identify if additional supports are needed for any portion (didactic and clinical) of the Nursing program. Students are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (215-646-7300 extension 21427) to arrange an individualized consultation to discuss any support services or accommodations they may need. . Additional information can be found at the site link: <https://www.gmercyu.edu/student-life/campus-resources/accessibility-services>.

Adapted from Drexel University School of Nursing and New York University School of Nursing