



Carl Sandburg College of Nursing & Health Professions

Essential Skills & Abilities required for Health Profession Programs

The Health Professions **applicant/student** must possess the knowledge and ability to effectively assist his or her patient's biophysical, psychological, social, cultural, and intellectual domains. Further, the Health Professions student must continuously and competently analyze the patient's condition and through intellectual reasoning determine the patient's status or need, plan independently or collaboratively for appropriate diagnostic or therapeutic actions, perform appropriate measures in accordance with the profession's scope of practice, and evaluate the care delivered and the patient's response to it.

An **applicant/student** for any of the Health Professions must have the essential skills and abilities necessary to provide competent patient care. These skills and abilities include: observation; communication; motor ability; conceptualization; integration and quantification; and behavioral/social acceptability. Should an applicant/student require accommodations, please contact Jake Runge at jrunge@sandburg.edu or 309-341-5262. However, an applicant should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner. The use of a trained intermediary is not acceptable, because an applicant's judgment would be mediated by someone else's skills and abilities.

The following skills and abilities are necessary to meet the requirements of the curriculum:

- 1) **OBSERVATION:** The applicant/student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and somatic sensation. It is enhanced by the functional use of the sense of smell.
- 2) **COMMUNICATION:** The applicant/student must be able to speak, to hear, and to observe patients in order to provide instructions and elicit information; describe changes in mood, activity, and posture; and perceive nonverbal communications. An applicant/student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients. Communication includes not only speech but reading and writing. The applicant must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in oral and written form with all members of the health care team.
- 3) **MOTOR:** Applicants/students should have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other physical assessment procedures. An applicant/student must have sufficient motor skills to provide care to patients in a variety of care settings and to manipulate the equipment central to performing diagnostic procedures and treatment to clients under their care. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movement, equilibrium, and the functional use of the sense of touch.
- 4) **INTELLECTUAL-CONCEPTUAL, INTEGRATIVE, AND QUANTITATIVE ABILITIES:** These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. The problem-solving and critical thinking skills demanded of Health Professions students require all of these intellectual abilities.
- 5) **BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES:** An applicant/student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Applicants/students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environment, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are all personal qualities necessary for members of the health profession.

Carl Sandburg College affirms that all students enrolled in the Health Profession programs must possess those intellectual, ethical, physical, and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence required by the faculty for safe professional practice.



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The essential skill sheets are lists of the most commonly encountered qualities and skills typically necessary to be successful in a particular health professions program or area of interest. The information contained in an essential skills sheet is not all-inclusive and is intended to be used as a guide only. Individual programs may have specific requirements or technical standards that must be met.

Physical

See objects 20 inches to more than 20 feet away	Write with pen/pencil
Distinguish colors and changes in its variation	Key/Type
Feel differences in surface characteristics	Twist
Detect odors (faint, strong, noxious)	Bend
Maintain balance (sit, stand, squat)	Climb
Pinch, grasp, squeeze, and manipulate objects	Move quickly
Sit for long periods of time	Maintain safety of self and others
Feel vibrations	Maintain physical endurance
Use peripheral vision	Sustain repetitive movements
Move within confined spaces	Stand/walk for long periods of time
Reach above shoulders	Reach below waist
Sit for long periods of time	
Push, pull, lift and/or support a minimum of 25 pounds	
Push, pull, lift and/or support up to 125 pounds	

Cognitive

Provide emotional support to others	Count whole numbers
Cope with unexpected situations and emotions	Measure weight or mass
Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently	Measure temperature
Apply knowledge from one situation to another	Measure liquid volume
Accurately recall information	Measure time
Combine knowledge and skills	Negotiate interpersonal conflict
Focus attention on task	Adaptability
Process information	Evaluate outcomes
Problem solve	Prioritize
Organize tasks to meet deadlines (hourly, daily, long-term)	
Focus attention on task	
Take measurements using specialized equipment	

Communication

Read, write, speak, and comprehend English effectively	Explain procedures
Verbalize clear and appropriate information to others	Direct activities of others
Communicate in a professional/tactful manner	Influence others
Communicate using a telephone	Communicate using a two-way radio
Record written information	



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Behavioral

Exhibit honesty and fairness

Promote physical and emotional well-being of others

Maintain professional boundaries

Respect social, cultural, and spiritual diversity

Work carefully while maintaining efficiency and organization

Respect individual values/opinions without showing bias or preference

Establish a rapport with others

Exhibit patience

Maintain professional appearance

Exhibit compassion