

Technical Standards

The Department of Nursing at Mount St. Joseph University has a responsibility to educate competent nurses to care for their patients (persons, families and/or communities) with critical judgment, broadly based knowledge, and well-honed technical skills. The MSJ pre-licensure nursing programs have academic as well as technical standards that must be met by students in order to successfully progress in and graduate from its programs.

MSJ wishes to ensure that access to its facilities, programs and services is available to all students, including students with disabilities (as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008) and all students can study and practice nursing with or without reasonable accommodation. MSJ provides reasonable accommodations to all students on a nondiscriminatory basis consistent with legal requirements as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to an instructional activity, equipment, facility, program or service that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to fulfill the requirements necessary for graduation from the nursing program. To be eligible for accommodations, a student must have a documented disability of (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; (b) a record of such impairment; or (c) be regarded as having such a condition.

The Mount St. Joseph University pre-licensure nursing programs have established specific technical standards for admission. These standards reflect the minimum mental and physical requirements necessary to complete their nursing program of study. An individual must be able to, with or without accommodations meet the following technical standards of general abilities and those specifically of 1) observation; 2) communication; 3) motor; 4) intellectual, conceptual, and quantitative abilities; 5) essential behavioral and social attributes; and 6) ability to manage stressful situations. Individuals unable to meet these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodations, will not be able to complete the program and are counseled to pursue alternate careers.

The standards reflect a sample of the performance abilities and characteristics that are necessary to successfully complete the requirements of the MSJ pre-licensure nursing programs. The standards are not requirements of admission into the program and the examples are not all-inclusive. Individuals interested in applying for admission to the Mount St. Joseph University pre-licensure nursing programs should review these standards to develop a better understanding of the skills, abilities, and behavioral characteristics required to successfully complete the programs. While not a component of the program applications, students invited to enroll in the program, will be required to provide an attestation statement from a health care professional (i.e., MD, PA or APRN) verifying that the student meets these technical standards. Students who need accommodation must meet with the University's Director of the Learning Center and Disability Services to make this determination.

1. Observation

Students must be able to observe demonstrations and conduct and participate in didactic courses and simulated learning opportunities. A student must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand, noting non-verbal as well as verbal signals. Specific vision-related requirements include, but are not limited to, the following abilities: reading written and illustrated material; observing demonstrations in the classroom, including projected slides and overheads; discriminating numbers and patterns associated with diagnostic instruments and tests such as sphygmomanometers and electrocardiograms; using instruments competently, such as stethoscope, otoscope, ophthalmoscope, and microscope. Observation requires the use of common sense, as well as the functional use of the senses of vision, audition, olfaction, and palpation.

2. Communication

Students must be able to relate effectively with patients, conveying a sense of compassion and empathy. A student must be able to communicate clearly with and observe patients in order to elicit information, accurately describing changes in mood, activity and posture, and perceive verbal as well as non-verbal communications. Communication includes not only speech but also reading and writing. Professional education for registered nurses presents exceptional challenges in the volume and breadth of required reading and the necessity to impart information to others. Students must be able to communicate quickly, effectively and efficiently in oral and written English in the classroom setting as well as the clinical setting.

Specific requirements include but are not limited to the following abilities: communicating rapidly and clearly with the health care team; eliciting a thorough history from patients; and communicating complex findings in appropriate terms to patient and to various members of the health care team (fellow students, physicians, nurses, aides, therapists, social workers), and others. Students must learn to recognize and promptly respond to emotional communications such as sadness, worry, agitation, and lack of comprehension of healthcare communication. Students must be able to read and to record observations and plans legibly, efficiently and accurately in documents such as the patient record.

Students must be able to prepare and communicate concise but complete summaries of individual encounters and complex, prolonged encounters, including hospitalizations. Students must be able to complete forms according to directions in a complete and timely fashion.

3. Sensory and Motor Coordination or Function

Students must have sufficient sensory and motor function to perform a physical examination utilizing palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other assessment techniques. In general, this requires sufficient exteroceptive sense (touch, pain and temperature), proprioceptive sense (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis and vibratory), and motor function. A student should be able to execute motor movements reasonably promptly to urgencies within the hospital, and must not hinder the ability of their co-workers to provide prompt care, obtain diameters of various body structures using tape measure, measure blood pressure and pulse. Students should be able to perform nursing skills requiring the use of gross and fine motor skills (e.g. IV insertion, venous blood draw, urinary catheter insertion). Examples of emergency responses reasonably required of nurses include arriving quickly when called, performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation, medication/IV solution/blood product administration, and application of pressure to stop bleeding. Students must perform actions which require the use of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional use of the senses of touch and vision. Students must also be able to assist and/or participate in various lifting activities. In addition, students must be able to assist with repositioning and ambulating patients.

4. Intellectual-Conceptual Integrative and Quantitative Abilities

These abilities include measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, judgment, numerical recognition and synthesis. Problem solving, a critical skill demanded of registered nurses, requires all of these intellectual abilities, and must be performed quickly, especially in emergency situations.

Students must be able to identify significant findings from history, physical examination, and laboratory data and provide a reasoned explanation for nursing intervention. The ability to incorporate new information from peers, teachers, and the healthcare literature in formulating nursing diagnoses and care plans is essential. Good judgment in patient assessment, nursing diagnosis, and therapeutic planning and evaluation is essential; students must be able to identify and communicate the limits of their knowledge to others when appropriate.

5. Behavioral Attributes

Empathy, integrity, honesty, concern for others, good interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that are required. Students must possess the emotional health required for full use of their 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. Candidates must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress in the classroom and clinical area. At times, this requires the ability to be aware of and appropriately react to one's own immediate emotional responses. For example, students must maintain a professional demeanor and organization in the face of long hours and personal fatigue, dissatisfied patients, and tired colleagues.

Students must be able to develop professional relationships with patients, providing comfort and reassurance when appropriate while protecting patient confidentiality. Students must possess adequate endurance to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. All students are at times required to work for extended periods, occasionally with rotating shifts. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many patients. Students are expected to accept appropriate suggestions and criticism and if necessary, respond by modification of behavior.