

# School of Nursing

## Technical Standards for the Master's and Post-Master's Nursing Education

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### Purpose:

The VCU School of Nursing is responsible for providing education without regard to disability while assuring that academic and technical standards are met. This document defines the non-academic criteria for advancement through and graduation from the Nursing (BS, MS, PhD) programs at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Nursing.

The following technical standards describe the essential functions that a student is expected to demonstrate in order to fulfill the requirements of a nursing education program, and thus, are required for advancement through and graduation from the program. The technical standards for each category identified below are consistent with the expectation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The technical skill areas include motor, sensory/observation, communication, cognitive and behavioral.

### Standards:

#### 1. Motor Skills:

- a. GENERAL: A student must have sufficient motor function to execute movements essential to providing effective healthcare activities required of an advanced practice nurse.
- b. SPECIFIC: A student must possess the sensory and motor skills to perform inspection, palpation, percussion, auscultation and other diagnostic maneuvers, basic laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures. Such actions require coordination of gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium and functional uses of the senses of touch and vision.
- c. SPECIFIC: A student must be able to perform basic life support including CPR, transfer and position patients with disabilities, physically restrain adults and children who lack motor control, and position and reposition him/herself around the patient and chair in a sitting or standing position. A student must promote and support the ability of co-workers to perform prompt care. A student must be able to use and calibrate equipment. A student must possess the ability to move safely within any confined client setting and assist patients with physical weaknesses.

#### 2. Sensory/Observation:

- a. GENERAL: A student must be able to acquire information through demonstrations and experiences in basic sciences and nursing courses consistent with standards of advanced practice nursing.
- b. SPECIFIC: Such information includes, but is not limited to, information conveyed through:
  - 1) physiologic, pharmacologic, microbiological and microscopic images of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathologic states;
  - 2) information from written documents and images;
  - 3) information from health related sciences.
- c. GENERAL: A student must possess auditory, visual and tactile abilities sufficient for observation and assessment necessary to provide advanced nursing care.
- d. SPECIFIC: A student must be able to use sight, hearing and touch necessary to perform examinations, diagnose and treat conditions requiring advanced practice nursing care.

#### 3. Communications:

- a. GENERAL: A student must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, family members and other members of the healthcare team. This includes communication related to obtaining a health history as well as explaining diagnoses and plans of care. The student must be able to communicate in ways that are safe and not unduly alarming to patients.
- b. SPECIFIC: A student must have sufficient facility with English: to retrieve information from texts and lectures and communicate concepts on written exams and patient charts; elicit patient backgrounds; describe patient changes in moods, activity and posture; and coordinate patient care with all members of the healthcare team. A student must be able to communicate in lay language so that patients and their families can understand the patient's conditions and, thereby, be more likely to comply with treatment and preventive regimens.

#### 4. Cognitive:

- a. GENERAL: A student must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate and synthesize complex information and demonstrate acquired knowledge across multiple care settings.
- b. SPECIFIC: A student must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships of structures. Problem solving requires all of these intellectual abilities. A student must be able to perform these problem solving skills to ensure appropriate and timely patient care. A student must be able to make sound and rational decisions.

#### 5. Behavioral:

- a. GENERAL: A student must possess the mental health required for full use of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients and the development of mature, sensitive and effective relationships with patients.
- b. SPECIFIC: A student must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest and motivation are all personal qualities that will be assessed during the admissions and educational processes. A student must be able to manage apprehensive patients with a range of moods and behaviors in a tactful, professional manner so as not to alienate or antagonize them. A student must be able to accept criticism and respond by appropriate modification of behavior. A student must be able to interrelate among colleagues, staff and patients with honesty, integrity, respect and non-discrimination.

I attest that I have read and understand the technical standards required to successfully complete the program in nursing, and I believe that I can, and am prepared to meet these requirements.

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Name (please print)

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Applicant signature

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Date