

Practical Nursing
Essential skills for Admission and Progression
Physical and Psychological Requirements

By law, a prospective nursing candidate must demonstrate the physical and psychological ability to provide safe nursing care. With this legal requirement as a guide, every prospective student must assess his or her ability to provide safe and competent nursing care prior to choosing nursing as a career. To understand the physical and psychological qualifications needed for successful nursing, the essential abilities have been listed below.

Qualifications	Standard	Examples of necessary Activities
Critical Thinking	The nursing student must possess critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cause-effect relationships in clinical situations • Assess risks and provide for patient safety • Consider multiple priorities and make effective decisions quickly
Interpersonal Skills	The nursing student must possess interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student must be able to establish helping relationships with patients, families, significant others and the interdisciplinary health care team. • Demonstrate caring behaviors
Communication	The nursing student must possess communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and written form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate relevant, accurate, and complete information in a concise and clear manner both verbally and in writing to patients and health care team members. • Utilize information technology to support and communicate the provision of care.
Mobility	The nursing student must possess physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move around in patient rooms, workspaces, and treatment areas • Administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation. • Stand, squat, reach above head, lift, push, pull • Walk the equivalent of five miles daily at work.
Motor Skills	The nursing students must possess gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective nursing care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calibrate and use equipment, e.g. administer injections, insert catheters, manipulate intravenous equipment, and position and transfer patients.
Hearing	The nursing student must possess auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear monitor alarms, emergency signals and cries for help • Auscultate sounds (Blood pressure, breath and heart sounds)
Visual	The nursing student must possess visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in nursing care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe patient/client responses, see a change in skin color, read the scale on a syringe.

Qualifications	Standard	Examples of necessary Activities
Tactile	The nursing student must possess tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform palpation, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention, e.g. insertion of catheters, palpate a pulse.
Weight Bearing	The nursing student must possess the ability to maneuver/move 40-50 pounds, weekly and sometimes daily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position patients and move equipment.
Emotional	The nursing student must possess emotional stability sufficient to maintain composure in stressful situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cope effectively with stress in the workplace • Cope with client and colleague emotions calmly • Receive corrective feedback calmly
Environmental	The nursing student must possess the ability to tolerate environmental stressors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt to variations in work schedules • Work safely with chemicals used in health care settings. • Work in areas that are close, crowded, or noisy

The above listed requirements are essential skills that a student must possess in order to progress satisfactorily through the nursing curriculum. A prospective student with a disability that is concerned that the disability may impact his or her ability to perform one or more of these skills, provide patient care, or participate in other job activities, is encouraged to contact a disabilities services counselor for assistance by calling 919-536-7208 or email disabilityservices@durhamtech.edu.

Occasionally, a student may experience a change in the status of these requirements while progressing through the curriculum. Should this occur, the student is required to notify the clinical faculty. The student will be provided with referrals for professional assistance. Each student will be given the opportunity to meet clinical objectives within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the program director in consultation with the helping professional.

However, a student may be denied continued enrollment in the Practical Nursing program until any identified issue is resolved. Should the issue remain unresolved after a reasonable period of time, the student may be dropped from the course.

To verify a student's ability to provide essential nursing care during clinical training, a physical examination is required of all students. This examination will be documented by a physician/nurse-practitioner on the form provided by the Admissions, Registration, and Records office.

All prospective students must be in stable emotional or mental health. This must be documented on the student's physical examination form and signed by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner.

Likewise, all students completing the Practical Nursing program and applying to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN) to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) must sign an affidavit of physical and mental competency to safely practice in North Carolina. The North Carolina Board of Nursing provides forms.