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# REQUISITE SKILLS AND ABILITIES FOR ENTRY-LEVEL REGISTERED NURSE PRACTICE



Association of  
**Registered Nurses**  
of Newfoundland  
and Labrador



This Regulatory document was approved by ARNNL Council in 2012.

The Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (ARNNL) sets the education and practice standards for entry into the profession of registered nursing in Newfoundland and Labrador. One important part of meeting the entry requirements is to attain the competencies required for entry-level registered nurse (RN) practice. This document is an interpretive guideline of the assumption that entry-level nurses possess the requisite skills and abilities as identified in the ARNNL document *Competencies Required for Entry-Level Registered Nurse Practice*. These competencies guide curriculum development and describe the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and judgments expected of entry-level registered nurses in order to provide safe, competent, compassionate and ethical nursing care in a variety of practice settings. By the successful completion of their basic nursing education program, all students must demonstrate their capacity to meet the entry-level nurse competencies. Nurses enter the profession in Newfoundland and Labrador as generalists, and therefore must meet all of ARNNL's entry-level competencies.

The purpose of this document is to provide potential nursing students with information on the requisite skills and abilities required of a registered nurse and to identify their potential need for accommodation while completing an educational program to become a member of the nursing profession. This document is not a guideline for general use in relation to the necessary skills and abilities in the workplace or the duty to accommodate persons with disabilities, and is limited to prospective nursing students.

Certain capabilities are necessary in order to attain the entry-level competencies. These capabilities are called **Requisite Skills and Abilities** and are described in seven categories; behavioral, cognitive, communication, environmental, interpersonal, physical, and sensory perceptual. Prospective nursing students, career advisors and Schools of Nursing should consider the required capabilities for nursing practice in determining if registered nursing is an appropriate career choice.

ARNNL supports an equitable process and prospective students with a disability are entitled to reasonable accommodation provided that patient safety and well-being are not compromised. Students should review with the educational institutions the potential need for accommodation in the nursing education program in order for the student to obtain the essential competencies. Although there is no specific reference to accommodation in the Newfoundland and Labrador *Human Rights Act, 2010*, S.N.L. 2010, c.H-13.1 ("*NL Human Rights Act, 2010*"), accommodation has been defined as "the process of making alterations to the delivery of services so that those services become accessible to more people, including persons with disabilities" and has been further defined as "the adjustment of a rule, practice, condition, or requirement to take into account the specific needs of an individual or group with one or more protected characteristics in the *Human Rights Act*." The *NL Human Rights Act, 2010* does require that where any limitation, exclusion or denial exists because of a disability, there must be a good faith reason. The Supreme Court of Canada identified the Meiorin Test (1999) as a measure of whether a requisite skill and ability is reasonable and justifiable.

This requisite skill and ability must be:

- rationally connected to the performance of the job;
- adopted in an honest and good faith belief that it is necessary to fulfill a legitimate work-related purpose; and
- reasonably necessary to accomplish a legitimate work-related purpose.



In 2010, the Alberta Human Rights Commission did state that accommodation does not require that post-secondary institutions lower academic or non-academic standards to accommodate students with disabilities, or relieve the student of the responsibility to develop the essential skills and competencies expected of all students (e.g., entry-level competencies).

ARNNL has identified the requisite skill and ability categories necessary to provide safe, competent, compassionate and ethical nursing care to the public. However, these are intended to be guidelines only and reasonable accommodation may still be provided to both individuals and groups in some circumstances. Prospective students with concerns about whether or not they have the required skills and abilities for progression through, or successful completion of, a nursing education program should contact the educational institution where they intend to apply. Students should be prepared to disclose relevant information regarding their disability so that it may be determined whether accommodation is possible in the specific set of circumstances.

## Requisite Skill and Ability Categories

The requisite skills and abilities are organized in seven categories with examples of entry-level registered nursing activities to illustrate each. They are included to provide a snapshot of the nature and kind of activities involved in typical entry-level registered nurse practice. Note: The examples are not an exhaustive list and are intended to mean “including, but not limited to” the particular examples provided.

### ***Behavioural***

Ability to conduct oneself in a professional manner.

Example:

- Maintain a calm and respectful demeanor while providing safe, competent, compassionate, and ethical nursing care;
- Create and maintain a safe environment for self and others;
- Respond appropriately in situations that are stressful or that involve conflict;
- React appropriately to giving and receiving physical touch and working in close proximity with a full range of clients;
- Fulfill responsibility as member of a health care team;
- Manage time and set priorities appropriately; and
- Provide care and support to clients through developmental and role transitions from birth to death in a variety of settings.

In practice, the entry-level RN:

Manages time and sets priorities in the face of multiple demands; maintains a calm presence with clients regardless of the client’s behaviour; provides physical care to male and female clients of all ages; uses appropriate safety precautions such as masks and gloves where indicated.

## **Cognitive**

Ability to perform skills which demonstrate mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning.

Example:

- Make appropriate decisions;
- Recall and apply information over a period of time;
- Recall and integrate information from past experiences, and a variety of sources, to inform current decisions;
- Exercise critical inquiry skills to support professional judgment and reasoned decision-making; and
- Competently apply a body of knowledge that provides for safe preparation and administration of interventions through different formats including the use of mathematical skills.

In practice, the entry level-RN:

Recalls clinical skills or constellations of signs and symptoms and diagnoses from previous clients and learning experiences and theoretical learning; perceives when situations require further inquiry; recalls information (including written, oral, or electronically-captured) provided by colleagues and clients; performs mathematical skills in order to prepare and administer medications.

## **Communication**

Ability to express and receive written, verbal and non-verbal information in a respectful and professional manner.

Example:

- Speak, read, listen, and write in the English language at a level that provides for safe and accurate understanding of words and meanings;
- Recognize own non-verbal communication and interpret non-verbal communication from others;
- Consider and respect individual beliefs, cultures, and differences in expression and associated meaning; and
- Elicit and attend to information from clients, colleagues and others.

In practice, the entry-level RN:

Accurately obtains and records a health history; communicates with other health care team members about clients; participates in client education; uses a variety of methods for documentation; accurately interprets changes in client's condition.

## **Environmental**

Ability to establish and maintain safe surroundings and function in the presence of environmental factors.

Example:

- Carry out client care in an environment subject to pathogens, noxious smells, distractions and presence of chemicals and irritants; and
- Implement interventions that facilitate protection of the public and oneself.

In practice, the entry-level RN:

Accurately obtains and records a health history; communicates with other health care team members about clients; participates in client education; uses a variety of methods for documentation; accurately interprets changes in client's condition.



### **Interpersonal**

Ability to interact with others in a respectful and professional manner.

Example:

- Develop therapeutic relationships with individuals, families, and groups; and
- Recognize the needs of clients and colleagues and respond appropriately.

In practice, the entry-level RN:

Supports a client during a painful procedure; maintains professional boundaries with clients; provides end-of-life nursing care; identifies that others have needs and perspectives that may be different than one's own.

### **Physical**

Ability to perform the following requisites well enough to provide client care and participate in educational activities.

Example:

- Move within limited space;
- Carry out tasks requiring manual dexterity;
- Stand and maintain balance;
- Push and pull;
- Perform repetitive movements;
- Perform complex sequences of hand-eye coordination;
- Bend, reach, lift, climb;
- Walk; and
- Carry objects.

In practice, the entry-level RN:

Manipulates forceps while performing wound care; prepares and administers medication by injection; assists a person to get out of bed and walk; climbs stairs for a home care visit; repositions a person in bed using appropriate safe handling techniques; manipulates a blood pressure apparatus.

### **Sensory Perceptual**

Ability to perceive with each of the following senses well enough to provide client care and participate in educational activities.

Example:

- See;
- Hear;
- Touch and feel; and
- Smell.

In practice, the entry-level RN:

Reads numbers and lines of measure on a syringe; feels a patient's pulse; hears a heartbeat through a stethoscope; detects an odor.



## Conclusion

ARNNL- approved nursing education programs provide a breadth of nursing knowledge and varied practice learning opportunities to enable students, with or without accommodation, to meet the entry-level competencies. Possessing the requisite skills and abilities for registered nursing practice is necessary for a student to acquire the entry-level competencies, and to successfully complete a nursing education program in preparation for initial registration and licensure in Newfoundland and Labrador. Further information on nursing practice standards and registration requirements is available from ARNNL or via [www.arnnl.ca](http://www.arnnl.ca)

## Acknowledgement

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# Resources

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