

FOR BCCNM REGISTERED NURSES

Requisite skills and abilities: becoming a Registered Nurse in British Columbia

British Columbians expect the health care system to provide them with safe care and support them to become as healthy as possible. Meeting this expectation requires that registered nurses be educated so that they are able to provide safe, competent and ethical nursing care.

Registered nurses practise with people of all ages regardless of gender, ethnicity or social situation in a variety of settings (e.g., hospitals, communities, homes, clinics, schools, residential facilities). The practice of a registered nurse requires a breadth and depth of specialized knowledge about health and illness, the pathophysiology of diseases, health promotion, health care systems and global health issues. Registered nurses plan, coordinate and provide care for individuals, families, groups and communities. The psychosocial components of care, including interpersonal, communication and teamwork skills, are fundamental to safe and effective registered nurse practice.

A registered nurse's education prepares her or him with the foundation necessary to be competent within the health care team and the health care system. Registered nurse practice encompasses clinical practice, administration, education and research.

By the completion of their initial nursing education programs, all student nurses must demonstrate the capacity to meet BCCNM's Entry-Level Competencies for Registered Nurses Practice in British Columbia and be able to practise within the context of the College's Standards of Practice.

Certain basic skills and abilities are required for a student to attain the Entry-Level Competencies for Registered Nurses in British Columbia. BCCNM, in conjunction with the Nursing Education Council of British Columbia, identified these requirements. They are called the Requisite Skills and Abilities for Registered Nurses in British Columbia and are set out in this document.

The requisite skills and abilities provide the public and potential students with information about the nature of the activities that nursing students need to perform and the general demands of a registered nurse education. This information may be used by prospective students to identify their personal fit with the requirements for registered nursing as a career choice. Counselors, parents, friends and others advising or discussing plans with students may find the requisite skills and abilities informative.

Anyone who has concerns about whether or not they have the required skills and abilities for admission to or progression through a registered nurse education program should contact the education program where they intend to apply. They may disclose and provide evidence of their needs to explore the kinds of supports they may require. In accordance with British Columbia Human Rights legislation, if there is a human rights case based in a ground of protection for public services (race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation), the educational institution would then engage with students in an attempt to negotiate reasonable accommodation of their needs, such that they may be able to meet the requisite skills and abilities.

Individuals who decide to pursue a career as a registered nurse need to meet certain formal requirements for registration with BCCNM, including:

- Successful completion of a recognized registered nurse education program
- Passing the registration examination requirements.
- Demonstrating that they possess the good character expected of a registered nurse
- Fitness to engage in the practice of nursing
- Consent to a criminal record check

The complete list of BCCNM registration requirements can be found on [BCCNM's website](#).

The requisite skills and abilities are organized in seven categories with examples of entry-level registered nursing activities to illustrate the requisite. The examples do not constitute the requisite skills and abilities and are not the requisites per se. They are included to provide a snapshot of the nature and kind of activities involved in typical entry-level registered nursing practice. Note: The examples are intended to mean "including, but not limited to" the particular examples provided.

Cognitive requisite skill and ability

- Remember information over a brief period of time
- Remember information from past experiences
- Problem-solve to develop professional judgment
- Reason to develop professional judgment
- Exercise critical inquiry skills to develop professional judgment
- Apply mathematical skills and abilities in order to:
 - add, subtract, multiply and divide
 - calculate ratios, percentages and apply algebraic equations

EXAMPLE:

The student: recalls clinical skills or constellations of signs and symptoms and diagnoses from previous clients; uses past experiences to inform current decisions; perceives when situations require further inquiry; recall written, oral or taped information provided by either colleagues or clients.

Communication requisite skill and ability

- Speak and understand spoken English well enough to avoid mixing up words and meanings
- Write and understand written English well enough to avoid mixing up words and meanings
- Recognize own non-verbal signals and interpret those received from others while considering individual difference in expression and associated meaning

EXAMPLE:

The student: elicits and attends to information from clients while taking a health history; communicates well with other health care team members about clients.

Behavioural requisite skill and ability

- Manage own behaviour well enough to provide safe, competent and ethical nursing care
- Engage with self and others to create a safe environment
- 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 part of a team
- Manage time appropriately

EXAMPLE:

The student: sets priorities in the face of multiple demands; maintains a calm presence with clients regardless of their (clients) behaviour.

Interpersonal requisite skill and ability

- Develop relationships and rapport with individuals and groups
- Recognize the needs of clients and colleagues

EXAMPLE:

The student: supports a client during a painful procedure; identifies that others have needs and perspectives that might be different from the student.

Physical requisite skill and ability

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

- Stand and maintain balance
- Manual dexterity
- Move within limited spaces
- Push and pull

- Perform repetitive movements
- Perform complex sequences of hand-eye coordination
- Bend
- Reach
- Lift
- Walk
- Climb
- Carry objects

EXAMPLE:

The student can: change a sterile dressing on a wound; prepare and administer medications by injection; perform urinary catheterization; assist a person to get out of bed and walk; maintain certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation; climb stairs for a home care visit.

Sensory perceptual requisite skill and ability

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

- Sight
- Hearing
- Touch

EXAMPLE:

The student can: read numbers and lines of demarcation on a syringe; can feel a patient's pulse.

Environmental requisite skill and ability

Ability to function in the presence of each of the following commonly encountered and unavoidable environmental factors:

- Noxious smells
- Disease agents
- Distractions
- Noise
- Chemicals
- Unpredictable behaviour of others

EXAMPLE:

The student can tolerate the odour of infections, body wastes, urine, feces and vomit.

For more information

BCCNM's Standards of Practice (Professional Standards, Practice Standards, and Scope of Practice Standards) can help you to understand important issues about registered nurse practice. They are available online at www.bccnm.ca

For more information about these requisite, skills and abilities, contact educationprogramreview@bccnm.ca.

Resources

- [Entry-level Competencies for Registered Nurses](#) (pub. 375)
- [Profile of a Newly Graduated Registered Nurse](#) (pub. 390)
- [Professional Standards for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners](#)
- [Scope of Practice for Registered Nurses](#)
- [Practice Standards for Registered Nurses](#)
- Alberta Human Rights Commission Interpretative Bulletin (2010). Duty to Accommodate Students with Disabilities in Post-secondary Educational Institutions. Edmonton, Alberta.

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