



**Essential Functions for Students in the  
Health and Community Studies Department  
RN-to-BSN Program**

*Western Washington University – Woodring College of Education*

***Introduction***

The Health and Community Studies Department at Western Washington University offers a Bachelor of Arts in Human Services, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, a Master of Education in Adult and Higher Education, and a Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling. The curriculum in each program is designed to support student attainment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet the national, regional, and local professional standards.

All programs offer a rigorous curriculum that places demands on students during their academic preparation designed to be comparable to the intellectual and professional demands that a graduate will experience during early years as a practicing professional. The programs prepare students to enter the profession as a generalist with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to successfully perform all the required functions associated with the role of entry-level professionals.

***Essential Functions***

Essential functions are the basic activities that a student must be able to perform to complete the curriculum. All individuals, including persons with disabilities, who apply for admission to any of the programs, must be able to perform essential functions in both classroom and field placement/practice settings. Students must be able to perform the programs' essential functions either with or without reasonable accommodations to be considered for program admission, retention, and graduation.

Each program has the ultimate responsibility for: the selection and admission of students; the design, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum; the evaluation of student progress; and the criteria for successfully completing the degree.

Faculty, staff, and Clinical Practice Instructors have a shared responsibility for the welfare of individuals who are served by students enrolled in the program. The program is responsible to its partner agencies and to the people they serve to assure that graduates are fully competent generalist professionals who work towards the well-being of individuals and who are capable of delivering quality services in an effective and timely manner. Thus, it is important that persons admitted, retained, and graduated possess the cognitive ability, integrity, compassion, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice as a professional.

The RN-to-BSN Program at Western Washington University adheres to the standards set by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and the Council on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). Within CCNE standards, the Nursing Program has the ultimate responsibility for: the selection and admission of students; the design, implementation, and evaluation of the

curriculum; the evaluation of student progress; and the criteria for successfully completing the major.

Faculty, staff, and clinical preceptors in the Nursing Program have a shared responsibility for the welfare of clients who are served by students enrolled in the program. The program is responsible to its partner agencies and to the clients they serve to assure that graduates are fully competent baccalaureate prepared nursing professionals who work towards the well-being of clients and who are capable of delivering quality services in an effective and timely manner. Thus, it is important that persons admitted, retained, and graduated possess the cognitive ability, integrity, compassion, and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice as baccalaureate prepared nursing professionals.

### ***Accommodations***

The Health & Community Studies Department, as part of Woodring College of Education at Western Washington University, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. The University, College, and Department do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, disabled veteran, or Vietnam era veteran status. When requested, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified students with properly verified disabilities.

The Department has established academic standards and minimum essential requirements that must be met with or without reasonable accommodations to participate and graduate from the programs. The disAbility Resources for Students office will determine reasonable accommodations. Prior to entering the program, it is the responsibility of individual students, when applicable, to request accommodations from the disAbility Resources for Students office (<http://www.wwu.edu/eoo/disability.shtml>) that he/she feels are reasonable and are necessary to execute the essential functions described below. It is also the responsibility of the student to review this on a quarterly basis to ensure meeting all of the essential functions.

### ***The Health and Community Studies Department***

The programs offered by the Health & Community Studies Department at Western Washington University endeavor to select applicants who have the ability to become competent professionals. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on satisfactory prior and ongoing academic achievement, but also on non-academic factors that serve to ensure that the student can complete the essential functions of the academic and field study program required for graduation. *Essential functions, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those abilities that are necessary for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum by all students, and the development of professional attributes required to be met by professional standards.* The Essential Functions required by the curriculum are in seven areas: 1) **motor**, 2) **sensory**, 3) **communication**, 4) **cognitive**, 5) **behavioral/emotional**, 6) **professional**, and 7) **ethical**.

**Essential Functions for Western Washington University's  
RN-to-BSN Students**

<b>Communication</b>	<p>The student must be able to accurately, effectively, and sensitively communicate information through language, reading and writing in English, and possess prerequisite computer literacy skills. Information may need to be communicated across a wide variety of communicative partners including but not limited to students, faculty, field supervisors, clients, families, and others in a comprehensive manner and under conditions where time may be limited.</p> <p><b><i>Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes relevant comments and appropriately participates in class</li> <li>• Uses standard conventions, correct grammar, and vocabulary in written and verbal communication</li> <li>• Addresses concerns regarding classes, assignments, instructors, practicum/internship placements, etc. in a professional manner with the appropriate individual</li> <li>• Builds effective and professional rapport with peers in the classroom, professionals in agencies/community, and instructors</li> <li>• Displays a positive attitude</li> <li>• Uses active and reflective listening to ensure effective collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making</li> <li>• Respects others' privacy and personal boundaries</li> <li>• Presents ideas and suggestions clearly and in a positive, non-confrontational manner</li> <li>• Listens in a confidential, responsive, and empathic manner to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences</li> <li>• Interacts with people from diverse backgrounds courteously, fairly, and professionally</li> <li>• Demonstrates a willingness and the ability to give and receive feedback</li> <li>• Displays social skills necessary for establishing professional rapport in settings on campus and in the professional settings (e.g., voice tone &amp; volume and language usage)</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Behaviors that imply the absence of these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives inappropriate information to others</li> <li>• Chronically deficient on upkeep of charts and/or records</li> <li>• Lies or fabricates data when needed to cover up mistakes and oversights</li> <li>• Provides data without appropriate checks for correctness</li> <li>• Represents the work of others as being original</li> <li>• Uncommunicative with staff and faculty</li> <li>• Fails to make appropriate arrangements if unable to be on time or present</li> <li>• Gossips, spreads rumors, or speaks negatively to peers, instructors, site supervisor, clients, or community members</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Cognitive/Sensory</b></p>	<p>The student must have the cognitive and intellectual abilities necessary to master relevant content in academic and field-based courses at a level deemed appropriate by the faculty, professional staff, and professional standards.</p> <p><b><i>Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes an independent attempt to answer questions</li> <li>• Seeks advice and information from appropriate resources</li> <li>• Independently seeks and locates needed resources</li> <li>• Seeks opportunities to learn new skills</li> <li>• Demonstrates a variety of quality research skills</li> <li>• Comprehends, memorizes, analyzes, and synthesizes qualitative and quantitative information</li> <li>• Interviews and interacts with individuals in field placement/practice settings</li> <li>• Acquires information presented through classroom demonstrations</li> <li>• Acquires information presented through experiences in the practicum, internship, and practice components of the program</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Behaviors that imply the absence of these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels existent policies are irrelevant, unimportant, and nonobligatory</li> <li>• Justifies doing things “just for the experience,” without taking needs of clients and others into consideration</li> <li>• Fails to use safe techniques when not being supervised</li> <li>• Requires or makes requests for excessive assistance or support by staff, faculty, peers, or site supervisors</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioral/Emotional</b></p>	<p>The student must possess the emotional health required for full use of intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and appropriate professional behavior.</p> <p><b><i>Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperates in group activities by contributing equitably to group effort</li> <li>• Acknowledges differing perspectives of individuals including people from diverse cultures and experiential backgrounds with empathy and understanding of differences and opinions</li> <li>• Conducts self in a calm and rational manner</li> <li>• Assumes personal responsibility for actions and decisions</li> <li>• Maintains mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with clients, coworkers, supervisors, classmates, faculty, staff, and other professionals under all conditions including highly stressful circumstances</li> <li>• Functions effectively under stress and adapts to environments and systems that may change unpredictably without warning</li> <li>• Takes appropriate initiative to solve problems in a timely manner, such as talking with an instructor</li> <li>• Demonstrates self-control in all classes, meetings, and interactions</li> </ul>

	<p>with peers and instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans and prepares in advance of class, appointments with instructors, and practicum, internship, and practice activities</li> <li>• Submits assignments on time and follows submission guidelines</li> <li>• Attends class and is punctual in class and in the practicum, internship, and practice setting</li> <li>• Contacts site supervisor in the event of absence or tardiness and makes up any missed time according to practicum, internship, and practice expectations</li> <li>• Adjusts behavior(s) based on feedback given by instructor(s) or practicum, internship, and practice supervisor(s)</li> <li>• Responds to feedback with a positive, open-minded attitude and does not become defensive or make excuses for performance or behavior</li> <li>• Follows up with instructor or site supervisor after feedback has been given to check progress or status</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Behaviors that imply the absence of these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unreliable in completion of tasks</li> <li>• Exhibits excessive emotional behavior</li> <li>• Argumentative</li> <li>• Sullen or arrogant with clients, faculty, peers, staff</li> <li>• Hostile responses to frustrating situations</li> <li>• Elicits hostility from others</li> <li>• Displays hostility towards challenging clients</li> <li>• Behaves disrespectfully to staff, faculty, site supervisors, or peers (e.g., eye rolling, sarcastic comments, blaming others, pejorative jokes)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Professional</b></p>	<p>The student must possess the ability to reason judiciously and act professionally as a student-professional.</p> <p><b><i>Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learns and follows professional standards of practice</li> <li>• Uses respectful language and manner regarding peers, instructors, site supervisors, clients, and community members</li> <li>• Behaves honestly in all interactions with peers, instructors, site supervisors, clients, and community members</li> <li>• Collaborates and draws upon professional colleagues to generate ideas for growth as a professional</li> <li>• Makes use of feedback from professional colleagues to support development as a professional</li> <li>• Meets expectations of scheduled commitments</li> <li>• Demonstrates professional responsibility, conduct, productivity, and effort</li> <li>• Adheres to established professional standards for dress and grooming in both class and in the field</li> </ul>

	<p><b><i>Behaviors that imply the absence of these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronically tardy or absent</li> <li>• Skips obligations if not supervised</li> <li>• Sloppy in appearance</li> <li>• Difficult to find when needed</li> <li>• Disrespectful and rude to faculty, staff, peers, or patients</li> <li>• Chronic malcontent and complainer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ethical</b></p>	<p>The student must behave in an ethical manner with peers; instructors; practicum, internship, and practice site supervisors; clients; and community members. Official university functions include, but are not limited to, practicum and internship, field-based learning, and any times that the student is perceived as representing WWU.</p> <p><b><i>Behaviors that reflect these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands all professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities and policies</li> <li>• Complies with the <a href="#">WWU Student Rights and Responsibilities Code</a>, which includes the policy on illegal possession and/or use of alcohol and drugs</li> <li>• Complies with WWU <a href="#">Academic Honesty Policy</a></li> <li>• Adheres to the ethical standards as defined by program of study</li> <li>• Gives credit to others when using their work</li> <li>• Keeps all client information confidential in all settings, including at the university and in the community</li> <li>• Uses appropriate procedures when working with client records and other privileged information</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Behaviors that imply the absence of these skills include, but are not limited to:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing of assignments or tasks to others when possible</li> <li>• Approach is “who is right” not “what is right”</li> <li>• Blames others for own shortcomings</li> </ul>