

Respiratory Care Program Essential Functions

All applicants are expected to meet the following non-academic criteria (essential functions) to participate in the Respiratory Care program.

In addition to being essential to the successful completion of the requirements of the Respiratory Care Program, these skills and functions are necessary to ensure the health and safety of patients, fellow students, faculty, and other health care providers.

All individuals, including persons with disabilities, who apply for admission to the respiratory therapist program, must be able to perform specific essential functions with reasonable accommodation. Essential functions are the basic activities that a student must be able to perform to complete the curriculum and function as a respiratory therapist.

Essential Skills

The following list contains information regarding essential skills outlining the physical abilities and behavioral characteristics necessary for the student to successfully participate in and complete the respiratory therapist program. These standards are not conditions of admission but reflect the performance abilities and characteristics necessary to complete requirements for respiratory care. The student should carefully look over the essential skills for the program and ask questions if not familiar with the activities or functions listed. The student must decide if he or she has any limitations that may restrict or interfere with the satisfactory performance of any of the requirements.

It is ultimately the student's responsibility to meet these essential skills if accepted into the respiratory therapist program.

The student should consult with the Program Coordinator to discuss any individual situation if he or she may not be able to meet these essential performance requirements.

Respiratory Therapists must possess the following essential skills:

Hearing

- Able to hear and understand patients and staff; assess and monitor patient sounds
- Must be able to function without the use of lip reading
- Communicate and interact with patients, staff, and families from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
- Follow verbal instructions.
- Use a stethoscope to hear heart, breath, and blood pressure sounds.
- Detect and discriminate between sounds of normal conversation.
- Hear percussion sounds during patient assessment.
- Ability to hear sounds of a variety of equipment alarms.

Mobility

- Mobile and strong enough to support and move patients.
- Lift to 25 lbs to assist moving patients, supplies, and equipment
- Able to stand for long periods.
- Ability to sit for long periods.

- Able to move quickly from place to place to perform patient care; climb stairs to respond quickly to an emergency on another floor when elevators are unavailable or full.
- Support and transfer patients safely from bed to wheelchair and modify patient position in bed.
- Respond to emergencies promptly.
- Reach equipment and parts of the patient's body.
- Reach above shoulder height to manipulate equipment.
- Reach below waist level to manipulate equipment.
- Read fine print, monitors, and gauges.
- Chart (write) procedures and observations legibly in a permanent medical record.
- Ability to see and discriminate between a variety of equipment visual alarms.
- Ability to observe demonstrations and patients close and at a distance to learn skills and to gather patient data (e.g., observe a patient's gait, appearance, posture, etc.).

Motor Skills (fine and gross)

- Perform multiple motor tasks simultaneously.
- Fine and gross motor skills sufficient to handle equipment and provide safe and effective patient care; steady aim and hand movements while manipulating objects or assisting patients.
- Operate and manipulate equipment; multiple operations may be required.
- Lift and transport oxygen cylinders
- Grasp and turn to attach oxygen to outlets and remove flowmeters
- Apply sterile gloves, utilize syringes, tubes, catheters, set-up and maintain sterile field
- Palpate pulses, feel arteries or veins for puncture; assess skin temperature
- Push/pull hospital beds; transport patients.
- Lift and move patients safely.
- Perform CPR.

Visual

- Read written instructions/orders.
- Read fine print, monitors, and gauges.
- Chart (write) procedures and observations legibly in a permanent medical record.
- Ability to see and discriminate between a variety of equipment visual alarms.
- Ability to observe demonstrations and patients close up and at a distance to learn skills and to gather patient data (e.g., observe a patient's gait, appearance, posture, etc.).
- Ability to visually monitor several computer screens with multiple cardiac rhythms, pulse oximetry, and capnography waveforms for sustained periods.

Tactile

- Distinguish textures, degrees of firmness, temperature differences, pulse rate vibrations, and strength.

Communication

- Students must be able to communicate orally and in writing with patients and members of the healthcare team.
- Students must be able to read and comprehend written material in English.

Intellectual and Cognitive Abilities

- Students must be able to measure calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, integrate, and apply information.
- Problem-solving, a clinical skill required of therapists, requires all these intellectual abilities.
- Ability to troubleshoot technology with biomedical engineering and clinical staff.
- Have basic computer knowledge and skills.
- Ability to modify therapeutic interventions to meet the needs of patients in a variety of care settings.
- Assess patients' physical and psychosocial needs in a variety of clinical settings by interpretation of written, verbal, and sensory observations and determine the appropriate interventions.

Behavioral and Social Attributes

- Students must possess the emotional health required to use their intellectual abilities fully, such as exercising good judgment, promptly completing all responsibilities attending to the care of patients, and developing mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and other healthcare workers.
- Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress.
- Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and to learn, to function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities inherent in the clinical problems of many patients.
- Ability to work as a cooperative, focused team player, take direction well, and have a positive attitude to work with the patients, nursing staff, and physicians.
- Respiratory Therapists should display good organizational skills and the ability to multitask to keep track of multiple patients and tasks.
- Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, interest, and motivation are personal qualities that will be assessed during the educational process.
- Students should demonstrate interpersonal skills sufficient to permit professional interaction with individuals and groups from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Maintain personal hygiene consistent with close contact during direct patient care.
- Ethical Standards A student must demonstrate a professional demeanor and behavior and must perform ethically in all dealings with peers, faculty, staff, and patients.