



School of Nursing and Midwifery Undergraduate Courses: Inherent Requirements

Health care is one of the most important priorities for populations worldwide, and nurses and midwives play a pivotal role in delivering safe, effective health care. The School of Nursing and Midwifery's undergraduate courses prepare students for practice within a range of health care settings and equip students with evidence-based knowledge and skills to adequately care for patients with a variety of complex illnesses. The Bachelor of Nursing courses offered by the School are accredited by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council and graduates are eligible to apply for registration as a Registered Nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (and Registered Midwife, if the Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Midwifery is completed). It is a requirement of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia that all students enrolled in the nursing courses hold Student Registration with the Board (refer to the following website):

<http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-and-Endorsement/Student-Registration.aspx>.

At course completion graduates will have achieved the expected professional standards. A number of inherent requirements are therefore essential to safely perform the skills and functions of the nursing role and consequently to undertake and successfully complete the courses. It is University policy to take all reasonable steps to minimise the impact of disability or health conditions on academic study. Reasonable adjustments will be made to enhance a student's participation in the University's programs.

Essential knowledge, skills and capabilities are required to undertake and successfully complete the undergraduate nursing courses and to practice safely as a registered nurse or midwife. Nursing and midwifery students are required to participate in a range of teaching and learning activities: seminars, skill and clinical simulation sessions, on-line activities, classes and clinical placements.

Compulsory clinical placements account for 800 hours of the Bachelor of Nursing. Student performance on each clinical placement is assessed and must be passed. Clinical placements require students to provide direct patient care as members of a multidisciplinary team. Therefore a wide range of functional abilities are essential for the delivery of quality and safe patient care during these clinical placements.

1. Physical and motor function

Nursing and midwifery practice requires the use of physical, visual and auditory functions to provide safe and quality patient care. Students must possess adequate gross and fine motor coordination, dexterity and tactile function to fully participate in the learning and assessment activities of the courses. Some examples where these functions are required include; using a range of information technologies, participating in practical skill-based simulations and undertaking placements in a range of clinical settings.

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Students are required to complete accurate assessments for safe patient care, including conducting a detailed physical assessment of a patient, and to implement care. Some specific examples include:

- Students need to have adequate hearing and vision that enables identification of subtle patient changes (e.g. change in skin tones, assessing slow pupillary reaction to direct light, hearing subtle wheezing, and hearing slight changes in the frequency of sounds when using a stethoscope).
- Palpating to detect abnormalities (e.g. feeling subtle temperature alterations of the skin, vibration, differences in texture).
- Students must be able to manipulate and effectively use a range of equipment accurately with both left and right hands simultaneously. For example, measuring blood pressure requires the use of a stethoscope and a sphygmomanometer. Students must be able to see and accurately read fine increments on the gauge of the sphygmomanometer and hear discrete changes in sounds through the stethoscope for accurate measurement.
- Students hearing and/or visual capabilities must adequately allow for response to equipment alarms and patient calls or subtle physical cues for assistance.

Students must also be able to perform a number of key clinical interventions, including but not limited to:

- manual handling (moving and transferring dependent patients, pushing/pulling beds, and theatre trollies);
- assisting with personal care (e.g. toileting, showering, grooming, and mouth care);
- accurately documenting findings on a range of charts; and
- preparing and administering injections, venepuncture and insertion of an intravenous cannula, procedure hand-washing, wound dressings, and insertion of a urinary catheter.

2. Communication and interpersonal skills

Nursing and midwifery practice requires advanced oral and written communication skills. Nurses and midwives need to communicate effectively, sensitively and be non-judgemental with patients/clients, relatives and carers irrespective of age, ethnicity, culture, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or religious beliefs. Students must be willing to complete physical examinations of male and female patients and provide care for both genders. An ability to gather, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information by verbal, written, pictorial and non-verbal means of communication is essential for quality and safe patient care. Nurses and midwives must also be capable of delivering concise, comprehensible written and verbal advice to patients, relatives, carers and members of the health care team.

Students must have the ability to interact and work effectively within a professional health care team and maintain professional relationships with all colleagues and patients and manage workloads under stressful circumstances. Students must have an awareness of other peoples' emotions and be able to perceive another's distress, as this may impact on quality and safe patient care.

Students should be able to recognise situations where their own emotional or physical state precludes delivery of effective patient care.

3. Learning skills

The course is demanding and requires cognitive skills to solve complex problems. Students must be able to work collaboratively during the course. Nursing and midwifery practice requires the ability to conduct comprehensive and focused assessments, plan, implement and evaluate nursing care. This requires an ability to analyse, synthesise and evaluate complex oral, written and visual information.

4. Professional attitudes and behaviours

Nursing and midwifery professionals are bound by Codes of Ethics, Professional Conduct Codes and Standards for Practice (<http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards.aspx>). School of Nursing and Midwifery courses include a strong emphasis on professional attitudes and behaviour and ethical practice. Course progression is contingent on meeting requirements of appropriate professional attitudes and behaviour consistent with the Codes.

The guiding values of the School:

The School's commitment to personal and professional integrity is reflected in its research and teaching. The guiding values are respect, honesty, trustworthiness, accountability, collegiality and professionalism. The School expects students to consistently uphold these values when representing Deakin University.