

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Students admitted to the Applied Psychology program are expected to perform the same essential functions of an employment position as a Therapeutic Staff Support worker. The essential functions are the basic cognitive, psychomotor, and affective activities that are essential to successful completion of the NCC Associate Degree Applied Psychology curriculum. Essential functions are categorized as: sensory (tactile, visual, hearing and smell) communication, psychomotor (gross motor skills, fine motor skills, physical endurance, physical strength, mobility), intellectual and cognitive abilities (reading, arithmetic competence, analytic thinking, and critical thinking), professional and social attributes (interpersonal skills, and communication) and application of legal/ethical principles and professional standards. All students are required to meet these essential functions. Allowing for individual differences, and encouraging program completion for students with a documented disability, the Applied Psychology Program will work with the student and Disability Services to provide any reasonable accommodation to meet these essential functions. Contact the relevant Applied Psychology Coordinator if you have questions regarding these requirements.

Sensory

Applied Psychology students must be able to accurately observe both close at hand and at a distance to learn skills and to make observations. Students must possess functional use of the senses that permit such observation.

Visual:

- See objects up to 20 inches away (e.g., information on a computer screen, skin conditions)
- See objects up to 20 feet away (e.g., client in a room)
- See objects more than 20 feet away (e.g., client at end of hall)
- Use depth perception
- Use peripheral vision
- Distinguish color (e.g. color codes on supplies, charts, clothing)
- Distinguish color intensity (e.g. flushed skin, skin paleness)

Visual acuity sufficient to:

- Observe facial expression and changes in skin condition and breathing
- Access client information on computer screens
- Read very fine print on medication labels and clinical documents

Hearing:

- Hear normal speaking level sounds (e.g. person-to-person report)
- Hear whispered, faint, unusually pitched, or atypically toned voices
- Hear in situations when not able to see lips (when client faces away)
- Hear auditory alarms (e.g. monitors, fire alarms, call bells)

Hearing acuity sufficient to:

- Comprehend speech in people with a communication disorder
- Hear warning signals and alarms

Smell:

- Detect odors from client (e.g., vomit, diarrhea, urine, body odor, etc.)
- Detect smoke
- Detect gases or noxious smells

Smell sufficient to:

- Detect odors exhibited by body fluids and poor hygiene
- Detect toxic gases in the environment

Tactile:

- Feel vibrations
- Feel differences in sizes, shapes
- Detect temperature
- Feel differences in surface characteristics
- Detect environmental temperature

Tactile ability sufficient to:

- Detect body movement and temperature
- Assess skin irritation
- Identify objects used with client by touch

Communication

Applied Psychology students must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in English.

Verbal, Nonverbal, and Written Communication:

- Teach client and family
- Explain plans, goals, and procedures
- Give oral reports to staff
- Interact with others in person, on the telephone, and on the computer
- Direct activities of others
- Convey information through writing (e.g., progress notes)
- Communicate with patients/clients, family members and health care providers regarding the individual's plan of care.
- Read and comprehend printed materials and documents.
- Document clearly and correctly on client's medical record for legal documentation.
- Transmit information through written documents that use good grammar, syntax, spelling and punctuation.
- Access clinical information via automated information system.
- Clarify the meaning of non-verbal communication.
- Use physical touch as a therapeutic non-verbal intervention.
- Present oral reports.
- Clarify treatment plans and goals.

Psychomotor Skills

Applied Psychology students must have sufficient motor capacities and mobility to execute the various tasks and physical maneuvers that are required within the program. Interns must be able to display motor functioning sufficient to fulfill the roles toward which the program educates.

Gross Motor Skills:

- Move within confined spaces
- Sit and maintain balance
- Stand and maintain balance
- Reach above shoulders
- Reach below waist (e.g., plug electrical appliance into wall outlets, pick objects up off the floor)
- Institute appropriate physical interventions to ensure client's safety
- Stoop and squat

Fine motor skills:

- Pick up objects with hands
- Grasp small objects with hands (e.g., teaching materials, pencil)
- Write with pen or pencil
- Key/type (e.g., use a computer)
- Pinch/pick or otherwise work with fingers (e.g., manipulate materials)
- Squeeze with fingers
 - Coordinate eyes and hands/fingers with speed and accuracy to make precise movements when providing client care
- Twist objects with hands
- Pick up or grasp small objects
- Transmit information via electronic means

Physical endurance:

- Stand (e.g., at client's side for up to 2 hours)
- Sustain repetitive movements
- Maintain physical tolerance (e.g., work entire shift)
- Walk moderate distances (e.g., up to 1 mile)
- Stand/walk to complete clinical day (e.g., 8/12 hour shift)
- Complete assigned clinical practice within an acceptable time period

Physical strength:

- Push and pull 50 pounds (e.g., position clients)
- Support 50 pounds of weight (e.g., ambulate client)
- Lift 50 pounds to waist level (e.g., pick up a child, transfer client)
- Move objects weighing up to 20 pounds (e.g., clinical materials)
- Use upper body strength (e.g., physically contain a client)
- Position clients
- Assist with ambulation

Mobility:

- Twist
- Bend
- Stoop/squat
- Move quickly (e.g., response to an emergency)
- Climb (e.g., ladders/stools/stairs)
- Walk
- Maneuver in small spaces*
- Move independently from room to room
- Twist, bend, stoop, engage in procedures and direct client care

*While behavioral health care agencies must meet ADA physical access standards, potential clients and equipment may limit the amount of available space in which to move.

Intellectual and Cognitive Abilities

Applied Psychology students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, remember and apply information. Creative problem-solving and clinical reasoning require all of these intellectual abilities.

Reading:

- Read and understand written documents
- Read and understand English printed documents (e.g., policies, protocols, standards of care)
- Read measurement marks

Arithmetic Competence:

- Read and understand columns of writing (e.g., flow sheet, charts)
- Read digital displays
- Read graphic printouts
- Tell time
- Measure time (e.g., count fifteen-minute intervals, etc.)
- Use measuring tools (e.g., ruler)
- Read measurement marks (e.g., measurement tapes, scales, etc.)
- Add, subtract, multiply, and/or divide whole numbers
- Use a calculator
- Write numbers in records

Analytical Thinking:

- Transfer knowledge from one situation to another
- Process information
- Evaluate outcomes
- Problem solve
- Prioritize tasks
- Use long-term memory
- Use short-term memory
 - Handle multiple tasks and problem solve simultaneously
- Assimilate and apply knowledge acquired from multiple learning experiences
- Seek supervision and consultation in a timely manner

Critical Thinking:

- Identify cause-effect relationships
- Integrate knowledge and skills
- Sequence information
- Utilize assessment data in determining appropriate interventions
- Prioritize tasks
- Comprehend and apply abstract concepts

Professional and Social Attributes

Applied Psychology students must exercise good judgment and promptly complete all responsibilities required in the program. They must develop mature, sensitive, and effective professional relationships with others. They must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities. Concern for others, interpersonal competence and motivation are requisite for the programs.

Interpersonal Skills:

- Negotiate interpersonal conflict
- Respect differences in clients
- Establish rapport with clients
- Establish rapport with co-workers
- Function as a member of an interdisciplinary team (e.g., consult, negotiate, share)
- Participate in partnered and group efforts in classroom and clinical learning activities
- Practice in a manner that is nonjudgmental and non-discriminatory
- Interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds

Emotional Stability:

- Establish therapeutic boundaries
- Provide client with emotional support
- Adapt to changing environment/stress
- Deal with the unexpected (e.g., client going bad, crisis)
- Focus attention on tasks
- Monitor own emotions
- Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently
- Handle strong emotions (e.g., grief)
- Function effectively under stress
- Assume responsibility/ accountability for own actions
- Provide patient/family with emotional support
- Adapt effectively to changing environments and increasing tension levels in a variety of situations (e.g., learning, client care, emergencies)

Application of Legal/Ethical Principles and Professional Standards

Applied Psychology students must demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors and must perform in an ethical manner in dealing with others. The Applied Psychology program requires personal integrity and the adherence to standards that reflect the values and functions of the profession. (NCC Policy on Student Professional Conduct <http://catalog.northampton.edu/Policies-CollegeAcademic/Policy-on-Student-ProfessionalConduct.htm>)

Ethical Stance:

- Demonstrate the application of the American Counseling Association Code of Ethics to clinical practice
- Adhere to the practice standards of the counseling profession
- Adhere to the legal/ethical standards for therapeutic support staff
- Apply negotiation and mediation skills in ethical decision making
- Reflect the values of the profession in their practice
- Demonstrate accountability for one's own practice
- Take action to protect the public from the unsafe, illegal or unethical practice of others
- Participate in the legal/regulatory/ social policy processes that influence behavioral health care and counseling practice
- Act as a moral agent in the practice of therapeutic support
- Abide by professional standards of practice regarding mandated reporting
- Abide by professional standards regarding duties to protect and warn
- Demonstrate ethical and professional attitudes and conduct
- Assist individuals and families in significant life decisions
- Participate in ethics consultation and training regarding clients receiving care
- Advocate for the welfare of individuals and groups
- Practice in a manner that preserves/protects client autonomy, dignity and rights
- Act as a client advocate
- Maintain client confidentiality