

**Department of Respiratory Therapy  
School of Medical Rehabilitation  
Faculty of Medicine**

**Essential Skills, Attributes and Abilities Required for the Study of Respiratory Therapy at the University of Manitoba**

**Preamble**

The Department of Respiratory Therapy at the University of Manitoba is mandated with the responsibility of providing an educational program so that graduates have the necessary knowledge, competencies, values, attitudes, and behaviors to enter the regulated professional practice of respiratory therapy in Manitoba or elsewhere. Graduates are expected to have an understanding of the societal context in which the profession is practiced and the ability to make judgments and examine issues critically, rationally, and coherently, in light of that context. They must have the cognitive, communication, sensory, motor, and social skills necessary to perform a variety of procedures in a specified time frame, while maintaining patient safety. They are also expected to display an interest and a concern for the value of life-long learning as a fundamental precept of personal development. Further they are expected to contribute to the enhancement of the profession as a productive member of the profession. The purpose of this document is to describe the skills and attributes required for success in completing the university program in Respiratory Therapy.

The competency standards for Respiratory Therapy are described in the National Competency Profile (NCP) for Respiratory Therapy in Canada <sup>1</sup>. The profile is produced by the National Alliance of Respiratory Therapy Regulatory Bodies (NARTRB). A revised version is expected in 2010. The University of Manitoba Respiratory Therapy program integrates these national competencies within their educational program. The program also adheres to the Occupational Profile – Respiratory Therapy <sup>2</sup> published in 2000 (currently under re-development) in defining their curricular requirements. This national syllabus was developed by the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT). The revised version is a cooperative effort of the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists and the Canadian Advisory Council for Education in Respiratory Therapy (CACERT). While the national competency profile forms the basis for the development of the national registration examinations, the national syllabus informs the NCP with respect to background knowledge. This document is also informed by the document entitled Essential Skills – Respiratory Therapists <sup>3</sup> published by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

<sup>1</sup> *The National Competency Profile - Respiratory Therapy was published in 2004 by the National Alliance of Respiratory Therapy Regulatory Bodies (NARTRB).*

<sup>2</sup> *Occupational Profile – Respiratory Therapy published by the Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (currently under re-development), 2000.*

<sup>3</sup> *Essential Skills – Respiratory Therapists NOC 3214 published by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, modified 2009/09/01.*

In addition to passing the accredited educational program and obtaining a degree in respiratory therapy at the University of Manitoba, the graduate must pass the registration examinations of the Canadian Board for Respiratory Care and be approved by the local regulatory body for license to practice in a particular jurisdiction.

Prospective applicants should be aware that scientific and clinical knowledge, patient assessment, situation management, communication, and professional behaviors and attitudes are all evaluated during their clinical rotations, as well as in timed simulations of clinical situations.

Students are expected to have and/or develop these required competencies according to prescribed standards, with or without reasonable accommodation. Students who anticipate that reasonable accommodation will enable them to meet the required standards for these skills and abilities are responsible for articulating their needs. Requests for accommodation are considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek out and review the applicable university of Manitoba faculty and department policies, regulations and procedures governing accommodation.

An offer of admission to the Respiratory Therapy Program should not be interpreted as evidence that the program has independently verified an applicant's skills, attributes, and abilities in the domains described below. These essential skills are required if the student is to be successful in achieving the competency standards for the profession.

These essential skills, attributes and abilities are grouped in six broad categories:

- Aptitude/Attitude/Professional Behavior
- Communication
- Cognition/Knowledge
- Sensory/Psychomotor//Observation/Perception/Physical Function
- Problem Solving/Decision Making/Critical Thinking
- Emotional Health

Each of the following sections provides illustrative examples of the expectations of students in the educational program and in their profession. These are not meant to be exhaustive lists but rather demonstrate the physical, mental, and emotional requirements of the program and profession.

### **Aptitude/Attitude/Professional Behavior**

Students in the respiratory therapy program must have an interest in human health and medicine. In particular, they should have a desire to assist patients to maximize their respiratory and cardiovascular function using a variety of therapeutic interventions, diagnostic tools, and health education strategies. They should have an interest in using sophisticated medical technology to achieve these goals. They must demonstrate sensitivity, empathy, compassion, integrity, fairness and concern for others. They must be respectful of individuality and diversity, be able to build trusting relationships, demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills, and be able to manage multiple demands.

They must be prepared to work a variety of shifts and potentially extended hours. They should expect to work in a variety of health care settings. They must be able to deal with the rigors of the academic and clinical curriculum. They must take primary responsibility for themselves and their behaviors. It is essential that students develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, other members of their professional community, and other professionals comprising the health care team. Students are expected to be professional in all their interactions, deport themselves in a professional manner, and participate equally in addressing their learning needs as part of their professional development.

### **Communication**

Students must be able to speak, to read, to hear, and to observe in order to effectively elicit and clarify information. As examples, students must be able to ; interview patients, review policies and procedures, complete forms, prepare letters and memos, review manuals, review specifications and regulations, prepare reports, use databases, spreadsheets, word processing and the internet, prepare tables, labels, lists, schedules, graphs, and charts, review schematics, read test results and radiographs. Students must be able to develop a rapport and therapeutic relationship by which effective and accurate information sharing can occur. Students must be able to coherently summarize and effectively communicate information to patients, patient's families, supervisors, and other members of the health care team. Students must be able to communicate verbally, in writing, and electronically using computers, pagers, public address systems, telephones, and video conferencing. Students must be able to communicate effectively to individuals and to groups. Students prepare teaching materials and presentations for individuals and groups. Students receive instructions and directions from teachers, supervisors and managers, discuss medical diagnoses and patient care with other health care professionals, discuss medical conditions with patients, and provide them with instructions, and speak to patient's families.

### **Cognition/Knowledge**

Students enrolled in the respiratory therapy program must demonstrate varying levels of cognitive abilities necessary to measure, calculate, and comprehend, reason in order to conceptualize, apply, analyze, integrate, synthesize, and evaluate information. They must have excellent verbal, written and numerical skills. They must be able to understand and apply equations and formulae, ratios and proportions, visual and spatial relationships, statistics and probability, and a variety of measurement instruments. All of these problem-solving activities must be achieved in a timely fashion. These skills must contribute to sound judgment based upon clinical and ethical reasoning.

### **Sensory/Psychomotor/Observation/Perception/Physical Function**

A student must possess a significant degree of motor function to safely perform initial and on-going assessments and interventions on patients, including performing physical examination, testing, treatment and other maneuvers, both on a general and an emergent basis. They must be able to use an array of medical equipment and instruments for therapeutic and diagnostic purposes. .A student must be able to acquire information through observation and perception by the use of the senses (visual,

auditory, somatic) and mental abilities. They require hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills to perform a variety of procedures such as inserting airways, drawing blood samples, and administering therapies and tests. They must be able to discriminate between colors to recognize color-coded identification. They must be able to perform a range of activities requiring differing levels of strength and stamina, including, moving equipment and cylinders, and moving patients. Students are expected to have the energy and strength to participate in all learning experiences of the educational program.

### **Problem Solving/Decision Making/Critical Thinking**

Students must be able to think on their feet, troubleshoot problems associated with equipment malfunctions, deal with patients who are uncooperative as a result of their medical condition, and suggest adjustments in therapy as a result of their findings. Students must be able to select appropriate equipment for patient needs and or physician orders. They choose the content and format of a variety of instructional materials. They make decisions about type, intensity, and timing of patient care within their scope of practice. They judge the appropriateness of therapies and equipment for particular patients. They consider patient's psychological capabilities, support systems, and living arrangements when evaluating equipment and therapy needs. They evaluate and monitor patients and equipment readings and make clinical decisions accordingly. Students must also demonstrate a capacity to accurately assess and reflect on their own performance to further direct their learning.

### **Emotional Health**

Students must consistently demonstrate the emotional health required for the full utilization of their intellectual abilities in the context of the physical, emotional, and mental demands of the program. They must demonstrate the emotional balance and resilience to cope with a myriad of emotionally charged or ethically challenging situations that frequently arise in the work setting. Students must be able to function effectively under the stress of a high workload, changing environments, time constraints, demanding situations, and shift work.