

7.13 Student Scope of Practice for Skills in the Clinical Setting

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines as to what skills students are and are not allowed to perform in the clinical setting (also referred to do as “dos and don’ts”). The guidelines are based on the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) rules and a review of student nurse policies from hospital clinical facilities used for clinical rotations. The BON states that nursing students can perform “tasks for which he/she has been prepared in the education program” but must also “comply with any limitations placed on student participation in specific clinical areas that may be part of the contractual agreement between the nursing program and the clinical affiliating agency” (https://www.bon.texas.gov/faq_education.asp.html).

The scope of practice is standardized to ensure consistency across all clinical facilities while ensuring students adhere to the policies of the various clinical facilities. This policy establishes if any one of our clinical partners will not allow students to perform a specific skill in the clinical setting, it is not permitted at any clinical facility.

1.1 Student Nurse Allowed Skills (Dos)

Students are only allowed to perform skills/procedures in the clinical setting that they have received training to perform. However, some skills nursing students are trained to perform are not allowed during clinicals (see Not Allowed Skills).

Examples of allowed skills students may perform independently (provided the student has been checked off as competent in the skill) include:

- Document in the medical record: shift assessments, vital signs, I&O, etc. (preceptor to co-sign as appropriate based on facility requirements)
- Care/discontinuation of Foley catheter
- Care/discontinuation NG/OG tube
- Basic dressing changes

Examples of allowable skills students may perform but **only under the direct visual supervision of either a clinical preceptor or UT Tyler clinical instructor**, regardless of how many times the student has performed the skill, include:

- Insertion of Foley catheter (only in patients over age 18)
- Insertion of NG/OG tube (only in patients over age 18)
- Medication administration via any route (see exceptions in the Not Allowed Skills section)
- Hang an IV solution
- Flush a peripheral or midline IV
- Draw blood from a peripheral vein (only in patients over age 18)
- Change IV tubing
- Nursing skills the student has been trained in but is not proficient
- Initiating a peripheral IV (only in patients over age 18)

1.2 Student Nurse Not Allowed Skills (Don'ts)

A student nurse may not perform any skill requiring advanced training or facility-specific check-offs (see nurse extern section for specific exceptions). Students are not allowed to perform skills deemed 'high risk' and inappropriate for students to perform. There are some skills that student nurses have been trained to perform but are not allowed to perform in the clinical setting due to hospital policies.

Students can observe the RN performing skills a student nurse is not allowed to perform but must not participate in the skill.

Following is a list of skills student nurses are not allowed to perform in the clinical setting

- **Specific Medications.** Nursing students may not:
 - Possess or administer controlled substances via any route
 - Examples of controlled substances students may not administer include opioids, benzodiazepines, antipsychotics, depressants, stimulants, etc.
 - Administer
 - Paralytic medications
 - Chemotherapy
 - Moderate sedation
 - ACLS medications
 - Emergency medications
 - Experimental/research medications
 - Mix, hang, or manipulate the rate of medications administered by **IV infusion**, including but not limited to:
 - Inotropes
 - Vasoactive agents
 - Analgesic agents
 - Insulin
 - Heparin
 - Pitocin
 - Administer any medication or total parenteral nutrition (TPN) through a **long-term central vascular access device** (such as mediport, portacath, central line, PICC line)
 - Initiate or adjust PCAs/epidurals
- **Miscellaneous.** Nursing students may not:
 - Document initial admission assessment (students can do the initial admission assessment, but the RN must perform their assessment and document it).
 - Access or draw blood from long-term central vascular access devices (such as mediport, portacath, central line, PICC line)
 - Access or draw blood from an arterial line
 - Discontinue an arterial line, long-term vascular access device, cardiac sheath
 - Change dressings for a long-term vascular access device
 - Restrain patients
 - Receive verbal or telephone orders
 - Witness legal documents (example: adoption, consents, power of attorney, advance directives)

- Document monitoring a patient receiving moderate sedation
- Cervical examinations
- CPR on a newborn
- Function as a translator/interpreter
- Function as a hospital sitter

1.3 Clarification for Student Nurses who are also Nurse Externs

Hospitals may require an individual to hold only one role at a time (either student nurse or nurse extern but not both simultaneously). However, in cases where an agreement between the hospital and college has been approved, the hospital may allow an individual to simultaneously be paid as a nurse extern and receive clinical hours as a student nurse.

1.3.1 If not being paid as a nurse extern while in clinicals as a student nurse

Students not being paid by the facility as a nurse extern for the clinical shift must adhere to the student nurse scope of practice. In this situation, student nurses cannot perform skills that are allowed of a nurse extern but not within the scope of practice of a student nurse.

1.3.2 If simultaneously being paid as a nurse extern while in clinicals as a student nurse

Students being paid by the facility as a nurse extern while simultaneously receiving approved clinical hours as a student nurse may follow the scope of practice for a nurse extern at that facility. Exception: a student in a different specialty area than hired and trained as a nurse extern can only perform the skills they have received training. For example, a nurse extern hired to Labor and Delivery will be trained on specific skills they can perform that a nurse extern hired to a Medical/Surgical unit will not have been trained on.

1.4 Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with the policy will result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action can include remediation, course failure or dismissal from the program.

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