

## SKILLS TESTING GUIDELINES

1. All students, Q1– Q5 are skills tested in the Skills Lab each quarter on a total of two skills.\*
2. All students are strongly encouraged to enroll in their current quarter Nursing Skills Lab course in order to practice learned skills.
3. Skills testing will occur during a regularly scheduled clinical day. The date and time of testing will be announced by your clinical instructor.
4. Criteria sheets identify only the critical elements for each skill. They are **not** step by step instructions on how to perform the skill.
5. In order to pass a skill successfully, the student must pass every identified critical element.
6. Remember that the key to success in skills testing is **practice, practice and more practice**. The more you practice, the more likely you are to succeed.
7. Your clinical instructor will observe you as you perform the skill, using the criteria sheet to determine performance of each identified critical element.
8. **The instructor's evaluation is the final word.**
9. In the case of a failure, due to time constraints, the critical element(s) you failed will be identified by critical element # only and you will be required to retake the failed skill that day. A retake will be observed by two evaluators (the initial observer and one additional instructor or Instructional Associate).
10. If you fail the skill during the retake, you will be shown the critical element(s) you failed and you will be given a **PI** on that skill, which will extend to the next quarter.
11. **Retake of PI Skill(s)** must be completed by the Friday of Finals Week. You will be tested by the instructional Associate on the initial test; if you fail the first time, you will be tested by 2 evaluators (one being a faculty). You will not be allowed to perform the relevant skill(s) in the clinical setting until you have passed a retake of the skill(s) in the lab.
12. The Skills PI will include mandatory enrollment in the corresponding Nursing skills lab course for the next quarter and testing on two additional skills (total of 4 skills) in skills testing.
13. Quarter 5 students with a Skills PI, **before** entering 6<sup>th</sup> Quarter Preceptorship must:
  - a. Practice a minimum of 4 hours in the Skills Lab
  - b. Successfully test off on the relevant skill(s)
  - c. Complete the remaining 11 hours working with 1st or 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter students.
  - d. The Instructional Associate will tell which instructor to contact to schedule the hours.

\*Each 12 week course (Q 2-5) will include skills testing on 2 skills: 1 current and 1 previous. Students in Quarter 1 will be tested on two Quarter 1 skills. Each 6 week course (Q 3 and 5) will test on ANY one skill (either current OR previous).

## Skills Testing Day

Your clinical instructor will give you the date and the time for skills testing. Be Early. You will be tested in the order of sign-ups, and your slot automatically moves as space becomes available. Wear your Name Tag and Watch with a Second Hand.

Skills testing is meant to be serious but not threatening. Please understand that your instructor(s) may NOT talk or joke with you or encourage you. **DO NOT** attempt to shake hands, hug, or have conversation with the evaluators.

Complete your skill(s), utilizing all the critical elements. The skills should be performed as though no one else except the client is present. Do not talk to the instructor(s) directly. **IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO ASK THE INSTRUCTOR(S) QUESTIONS.** You may talk to yourself softly thought the skill to help yourself or clarify what you are doing. There will be no response from the instructor(s). You will not be stopped at any time during the skill(s), unless you have exceeded the allotted time to perform it. You will tell the instructor(s) when the skill is finished. The start time and the end time will be recorded. You will be asked to sit down quietly after performing a skill. **Do not wander or talk with other students or the evaluators.**

There should be no need to ask questions of the evaluators about the skills. They will not be able to answer questions (“I’m sorry, I can’t answer that question. It is of a teaching nature.”) Everything you need to know should be in the scenario. The instructor is only to evaluate - they do not teach, encourage, praise, or criticize. **With the clock continuing to run**, you may ask the evaluator to repeat the scenario if you have forgotten which skill was assigned or necessary information. As the scenario is repeated, you may stop the instructor once the needed information is obtained.

There has been the occasion, after skills testing has started, when the instructor(s) notice a problem with the station. If that happens, the instructor will ask you to sit down until the problem has been corrected. Do not take the request as being something you are doing wrong. The station needs to be as neutral as possible to give you the exact same advantage as other nursing students. The time will start over. By the same token, you may think that there is an error with the station. In that case, point out your concerns to the instructor. If there is an error, you will be asked to sit down while the station is corrected and the time will start over. If the instructor does not respond, that means that the station is neutral and correct, and that the clock is still running.

You will have either performed all the critical elements within the allotted time or not. You may realize a mistake and start over at any time. This is YOUR decision. The time limit will be enforced. If you are doing a sterile procedure and you think that you may have contaminated something...**Problem Solve!**...state your concerns out loud and then proceed as you would as an RN...for example, you may need to change the needle, open new supplies, or start over if you think you need to and have time.

**Verbalize** means: student says something loud enough to be heard by instructor(s).  
**Examples: 3 checks of 5 rights-** means accurately do it aloud, correctly. **All 3 times must be 100% ACCURATE.**

**Documentation** includes, but is not limited to: legibility, black or blue ink, errors clearly identified: marked with a single line through the error and initialed, and signature with first initial, last name, and status (SN DAC).

**Aseptic technique** includes, but not limited to: wiping the connection port with alcohol, wiping stethoscope with alcohol, removing gloves before documenting, etc.

The **Skills Lab** MUST be kept as quiet as possible. It will be necessary to speak in LOW voices and as little as possible. Speak only loud enough to be heard by your instructor(s).

It is expected that all students will maintain professional demeanor and behavior at all times. In the case of inappropriate and/or disruptive behavior, you will be asked to leave the area and this may result in disciplinary action. Do not challenge or argue with the instructor during skills testing. If you disagree with the outcome of skills testing you may follow the process to appeal the decision.

#### **The “Check-In” and “Waiting Room”:**

1. You may read your skills over. There is no opportunity to practice the skills while waiting.
2. Only those **waiting** to be skills tested should be in the waiting room. Once you have skills tested, gather your possessions as quickly as possible and **leave the room**. Follow your instructor’s directions as to where to go, what to do after completing skills testing.
3. This room should be as quiet as possible, as to not disturb those students who are skills testing. Therefore, please control your “having passed” enthusiasm.

**NOTE: Please**, be very conscious of your “Waiting,” “Stress,” and “Nervous” style. Examples:

- a. Nervous Talkers: be sure you are talking **with** an active listener and NOT **at** a meditative thinker.
- b. Meditative Thinkers: do not position yourself in the middle of a group of students having a quiet conversation.
- c. High Energy Thinkers: exercise **before** coming to the testing environment.

A student may not bring anything into the skills testing area. Any and all supplies that you might need are provided.

The Skills Testing Committee would appreciate constructive comments on the Skills testing process. We review all comment and in the past have incorporated many of your helpful suggestions. Thank You.

## **Skills by Quarter**

### QUARTER 1

Blood Pressure  
Don Sterile Gloves  
Ear drops  
Eye drops  
PO Meds  
Radial Pulse  
Sterile Dressing  
Verification of NG tube

### QUARTER 2

Combining Insulins  
Intramuscular Injection  
IVPB Medication  
NG Insertion  
Subcutaneous Heparin Injection  
Wet to Dry sterile Dressing

### QUARTER 3

Deep Tendon Reflexes  
Fluid volume Assessment  
Neonate Apical Pulse  
Neonate Bulb Suctioning  
Neonate Respirations  
Neurovascular Assessment  
Uterine assessment

### QUARTER 4

Central Line Saline Lock  
Central Venous Dressing Change  
Central Venous Line Removal  
Foley Catheter Irrigation  
IV Push Lock  
IV Push Running  
Soft Restraints

### QUARTER 5 (MED/SURG)

Heparin drip Administration  
Neurological Assessment  
Recognizing Arrhythmias  
Suctioning an Intubated patient  
Titration of Medication