

PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE ESSENTIALS

Becoming a physical therapist assistant requires the completion of a technical education program that is both intellectually and physically challenging. The purpose of this document is to articulate the demands of this program in a way that will allow prospective and current students to compare their own capabilities against these demands.

Prospective students during the admission process will be asked about their ability to complete these tasks, with or without reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation refers to ways in which the college can assist students with disabilities to accomplish these tasks (for example, providing extra time to complete an examination or enhancing the sound system in a classroom.) Reasonable accommodation does not mean that students with disabilities will be exempt from certain tasks; it does mean that we will work with students with disabilities and the Access Office professional staff to determine whether there are ways that we can assist the student toward completion of the tasks.

Prospective students who indicate that they can complete these tasks, with or without reasonable accommodation, are not required to disclose the specifics of their disabilities. A student with a disability who wishes reasonable accommodation must **request it through the Access Office** and provide current documentation of their disability. If a student cannot complete essential tasks with or without reasonable accommodations, the student will not be admitted into the PTA program.

Prospective students who have questions about this document or who would like to discuss specific accommodations should make an inquiry with the Access Office on campus.

Clinical Experiences

The PTA Program requires students to obtain clinical experience as part of their course work. Students with criminal convictions or drug use may have difficulty progressing in this program. Hospitals and facilities may mandate that a criminal background check and/or drug screening check (at the student's expense) be conducted prior to placement in a clinical or field setting. It is the policy of the PTA Program to have all students complete a criminal background check and drug screening. Students not passing these checks may be prohibited from participating in the clinical thus rendering the student ineligible to satisfactorily meet the program requirements.

Essential Tasks Which May be Done With or Without Appropriate Accommodations

- Students must meet class standards for course completion throughout the curriculum.
- Students must be able to read, write, speak, and understand English at a level consistent with successful course completion and development of positive patient-physical therapist assistant relationships.
- Students must complete all written documents in a clear, concise and timely manner in accordance with practice productivity standards.

- Students must be able to see body/physical responses to levels of pain, exertion, and responsiveness, read and set parameters on physical therapy equipment, see objects from 20” to 10’ away, discriminate changes in tissue appearance, and use peripheral vision.
- Students must be able to hear faint voices and equipment alarms, and effectively use devices for measurement of blood pressure and breath sounds. Must be able to hear when cannot read lips due to face mask.
- Students must complete readings, assignments, and other activities outside of class hours.
- Students must gather decision-making pieces of information during patient assimilation activities in class or in the clinical setting without the use of an intermediary such as a classmate or an aide.
- Students must perform treatment activities in class or in the clinical setting by direct performance.
- Students must apply critical thinking processes to their work in the classroom and the clinic, must exercise sound judgment in class and in the clinic, and must follow safety procedures established for each class and clinic.
- Students must demonstrate their ability to: participate in productive classroom discussions, have respective interactions with classmates and faculty, develop appropriate therapist-patient relationships.
- Students must maintain personal appearance and hygiene conducive to classroom and clinical settings.
- Students must pass a Healthcare Provider cardiopulmonary resuscitation course (CPR).
- Students must demonstrate appropriate health status prior to enrollment, with annual updates on some items: no active tuberculosis, rubeola and rubella immunity, MMR, tetanus-diphtheria booster within 10 years of anticipated graduation, and hepatitis B vaccine series or written declination.
- Students must follow policies and procedures specified in the Student Handbook.

Typical Functions Which Achieve Completion of Essential Tasks

Students must:

- Attend class which consists of lecture, discussion, and laboratory activities for up to four continuous hours.
- Attend full time Clinical experiences.
- Sit for up to 4 hours, move in a confined space, squat, crawl, twist, stoop, bend, reach above shoulders, and kneel.
- Move from place to place and from position to position at a speed that permits safe handling of classmates and patients.

- Provide support to a classmate or patient while standing or walking. Lift 50+# and exert push/pull forces on patients and objects.
- Must be able to lift/support 100+# with assist.
- Use hands repetitively with a simple grasp and frequently use a firm grasp and manual dexterity skills.
- Coordinate verbal and manual activities with gross motor activities.
- Handle the stress of an intensive training program in preparation for fast-paced clinical situations and the stress of psycho-social responses of patients with disabilities.
- Apply universal precautions – mask, gown, gloves.