

Essential Functions Form

ESSENTIAL SKILLS OF A PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT

The following physical, cognitive and environmental performance standards are encountered and expected of physical therapist assistant students in classroom, lab, and clinical activities. A student must be able to perform each of the essential functions in order to be successful in the PTA Program.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTION	TECHNICAL STANDARD	REQUIRED COMPONENTS
Critical Thinking	Thinks critically and problem solves by assessing and utilizing scientific evidence for safe and effective physical therapy practice.	Questions, logically, recognizes and differentiates facts, illusions, and assumptions, and distinguishes the relevant from the irrelevant. Able to measure, calculate, analyze, reason, and synthesize information. Identifies and prioritizes issues in a responsive manner.
Interpersonal Skills	Interacts effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other health professionals, and the community in a culturally aware manner.	Establishes rapport and interacts professionally with patients/families, colleagues, faculty and other health care providers. Utilizes therapeutic communication techniques (attending, clarifying, and coaching). Reacts with empathy, compassion and sensitivity to the diverse needs of others.
Observation Skills	Observes, comprehends, interprets, and participates in demonstrations, laboratory activities, and clinical experiences for safe and effective clinical practice.	Through functional use of vision, olfactory, hearing, and somatic abilities is able to assess the patient, comprehend and interpret the information, and report the results to the supervising physical therapist.
Communication Abilities	Communicates effectively with diverse audiences and for a variety of purposes and situations.	Utilizes appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Utilizes correct grammar, expression, accurate spelling, and legible handwriting as applicable in oral, written and electronic formats. Provides effective, concise, and organized oral and written information and education to all pertinent individuals.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTION	TECHNICAL STANDARD	REQUIRED COMPONENTS
Physical/Motor Abilities	Possesses sufficient motor function and endurance to safely perform data collection skills and therapeutic interventions in a physical therapy setting.	<p>Regularly lift and move 25-50 pounds and exert enough pushing and pulling force to position or move patients and equipment, assist and resist a patient in exercise interventions using proper body mechanics. Assist with lifting heavier weights (150-350 pounds).</p> <p>Spend prolonged periods of time performing sustained activities of up to 4 hours at a time without rest. These activities may include walking, standing, bending, reaching, pushing and pulling.</p> <p>Ability to endure 8-10 hour shifts, 5 days per week during the clinical education component of the program.</p> <p>Possess the coordination, speed, agility necessary to assist and safely guard a patient who is walking (gait training), exercising, or performing other rehabilitation activities.</p>
Hearing Ability	Possesses sufficient auditory ability to safely perform data collection skills and therapeutic interventions in a physical therapy setting.	Hears patient concerns and emergency signals. Hears and interprets verbal instructions from others.
Visual Ability	Possesses sufficient visual acuity to safely perform data collection skills and therapeutic interventions in a physical therapy setting.	Observes patient conditions; observes patient/responses, Reads charts, computer screen, dials, labels, and gauges. Observes laboratory and clinical demonstrations. Displays visual/spatial skills sufficient for patient safety and comfort.
Tactile Ability	Possesses sufficient tactile and fine motor abilities to safely perform data collection skills and therapeutic interventions in a physical therapy setting.	Discriminates muscle tone, tissue temperature, soft tissue changes and performs appropriate hands-on interventions such as soft tissue mobilization, facilitation, or passive range of motion. Fine motor skills for effective and efficient patient management such as handling of therapeutic equipment and accurate documentation.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTION	TECHNICAL STANDARD	REQUIRED COMPONENTS
Professionalism	Exhibits appropriate professional attitude, appearance, conduct, and responsibility.	Respects others' opinions and beliefs. Abides by all aspects of student codes of conduct and professional code of ethics. Appropriate grooming, hygiene and dress for the healthcare setting. Complies with all legal and ethical standards and guidelines. Seeks out, utilizes and provides constructive feedback. Demonstrates effective use of time and resources. Tolerates and reacts calmly to stressful situations. Exercises professional judgment when prioritizing other's needs. Demonstrates flexibility and teamwork. Exhibits accountability for outcomes and actions. Follows through on commitments. Self-assesses, self-corrects, identifies personal needs, seeks resources for own learning and personal/professional growth.
Cognitive Abilities	Demonstrates organizational and time management skills.	Able to carry out multiple treatment plans on a daily basis and within the established productivity requirements and time constraints. Ability to work with multiple patients, families, and colleagues all at the same time. Ability to prioritize multiple tasks.
Behavioral Attributes	Functions effectively under stress.	Adapts to an environment that may change rapidly, without warning and/or in unpredictable ways.
Environmental Safety	Recognizes and protects self, patients, and others from environmental risks and hazards.	Follows universal precautions, safety/security procedures and protocols; works safely with potentially hazardous body fluids; utilizes disinfectants and cleaning agents; tolerates frequent hand washing and tolerates wearing of gloves, masks and safety eyewear.

I have read the Essential Functions for the Physical Therapist Assistant program, and I certify that I have the ability to perform these functions. I understand that a further evaluation of my ability may be required and conducted by the Physical Therapist Assistant program director and/or faculty to evaluate my ability for admission into, retention in, and progression through the program.

I understand that if my health changes during the Physical Therapist Assistant program so that I am no longer able to meet, with or without accommodations, the Essential Functions of the program, I may be dismissed from the program.

Signature: _____ Date: _____