

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAMS TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Granting of the PA degree signifies that the holder is a physician assistant prepared for entry into the practice of medicine. Therefore it follows that graduates must have the knowledge and skills to practice medicine as PAs in a broad variety of clinical situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Candidates must also have the physical and emotional stamina to function in a competent manner in educational and practice settings that may involve heavy workloads and stressful situations. Accordingly, candidates for the degree must be able to perform specific essential functions that the faculty deem requisite for the practice of medicine. These functions, expressed as technical standards, fall into several broad categories, including: observation, communication; motor; conceptual, integrative and quantitative; and behavioral and social.

Observation

Candidates must be able to observe demonstrations in the basic sciences, medical illustrations and models, microscopic studies of microorganisms and tissues in normal and pathological states. They must also be able to directly and accurately observe a patient's demeanor, see a patient's physical condition, and obtain a medical history and perform a physical examination correctly on the patient in order to integrate the information derived from these observations in order to develop an accurate diagnostic and treatment plan. These skills require the functional use of vision, hearing, smell, and somatic sensation.

Communication

Candidates must be able to speak, hear, and observe patients in a clinical setting and elicit information, perceive nonverbal communications and detect changes in mood. They must be able to record information accurately and clearly, speak fluent English, and communicate effectively and sensitively with patients and families. Candidates must also be able to communicate effectively with other members of the healthcare team in oral, written and electronic form, and provide accurate information in patient care settings in which decisions based upon those communications must be made rapidly.

Motor

Candidates must have sufficient motor function to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other diagnostic maneuvers necessary to complete a full physical examination. They must possess motor function sufficient to perform basic laboratory tests (e.g., urinalysis, CBC, etc.) and carry out diagnostic procedures (e.g., venipuncture, arterial puncture, paracentesis, thoracentesis, lumbar puncture, etc.). These skills require coordination of gross and fine muscle movements, equilibrium, and sensation. Candidates must be able to execute the appropriate motor movements required to provide general care as well as emergency treatment to patients. Examples of emergency treatment reasonably required of physician assistants are cardiopulmonary resuscitation, administration of intravenous medication, the application of pressure to stop bleeding, the management of obstructed airways, the suturing of simple wounds, and the performance of simple obstetrical maneuvers. A candidate must be able to transport themselves from one location to another in a timely fashion in order to facilitate patient care responsibilities and receive educational training.

Interpretative, Conceptual and Quantitative

Candidates for the degree must have effective and efficient learning techniques and habits that allow for mastery of the complex PA curriculum. They must be able to learn through a variety of modalities, including, but not limited to, classroom instruction, small group activities, individual study, preparation and presentation of reports, and use of computer technology. They must be able to memorize, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize. They must also be able to comprehend spatial relationships and three-dimensional models.

Behavioral and Social

Candidates must understand the legal and ethical aspects of the practice of medicine and function within the guidelines established by the law and by the ethical standards of the PA profession. They must be able to relate to patients and their families, colleagues, and other members of the healthcare team with courtesy, maturity, and respect for the dignity of individuals. This requires that they place the welfare of their patients foremost, and demonstrate honesty, integrity, dedication, compassion and nondiscrimination in the care of their patients. They must at all times demonstrate the emotional stability to be able to exercise good judgment, and carry out prompt completion of all the responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of their patients in a sensitive and effective manner. This sensitivity includes self-examination of personal attitudes, perceptions, and stereotypes in order to avoid potential negative impact on relationships and patient care. Applicants must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and professional responsibility to their patients, and to learn to function in an environment of uncertainty, in which changes may occur rapidly and without warning. A candidate must be able to accept criticism and respond by a modification of behavior. All of these personal qualities will be assessed during the admissions and educational process.

Physician Assistant Program - Pleasantville Technical Standards

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