

Physical Therapist Assistant Program Technical Standards & Essential Functions

The following is a table of the technical standards and essential functions required by the Physical Therapist Assistant program in order to participate in clinical experiences with contracted facilities; and ultimately, to practice within the profession. The technical standards as stated herewith are not conditions of admission to a program of study. Rather, they reflect performance abilities that are necessary for a student to successfully complete the requirements of the specified Health Occupations Division program.

The delivery of safe, effective physical therapy requires that students be able to perform functions related to the technical standards outlined here. The inability of a student to perform these functions may result in the student being unable to meet course objectives for lab or clinical experience; and thus, to progress in the Physical Therapist Assistant program. Additionally, if a student is unable to perform these required competencies, the student may pose a risk of harm to themselves, colleagues, or the patients for whom care is being provided.

All applicants meeting the appropriate academic requirements shall be considered equally for admission to Cerritos College or any academic program regardless of race, color, religion, sex, marital status, beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, age, or physical or mental disability.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS (ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS)	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES (NOT ALL-INCLUSIVE)
Cognitive Ability	• Demonstrate critical-thinking ability sufficient for collecting, analyzing, and integrating information and knowledge in order to safely and accurately process primary care provider orders and promote positive patient outcomes and professional behavior. • Exhibit ability to create, apply and/or adapt interventions within the plan of care established by the physical therapist. • Exhibit ability to organize and prioritize tasks. • Exhibit ability to function effectively under stress and time constraints. • Exhibit awareness of, and ability to work with, diverse populations. • Exhibit ability to follow policies and procedures required by clinical and academic settings.	• Perform measurements and calculations. • Analyze and recall complex information and apply to new situations. • Maintain focus and attention in class and clinical sessions. • Interpret information from team members accurately. • Solve problems in patient care. • Organize and prioritize multiple tasks; integrate and analyze written, verbal, and observed data regarding patient care. • Understand the rationale for, and comply with, HIPAA standards, especially confidentiality. • Demonstrate the ability to assist accurately with all patient care duties and physical therapy procedures. • Follow a process from start to finish utilizing sequential established policies and procedures.
Communication Ability	• Demonstrate ability to speak, read, comprehend, and write English at a level that meets the need for clear and effective communication with instructors, peers, coworkers, patients/families, and other health care providers.	• Interact and establish rapport with individuals, families, and groups from diverse populations. • Provide explanations and teaching. • Comprehend written and verbal communication.

		• Provide accurate concise written and verbal reports. • Interpret non-verbal communication accurately.
Interpersonal/ Intrapersonal Skills and Behavior	• Demonstrate emotional and psychological stability sufficient to function under stress and to adapt to ever-changing situations. • Demonstrate ability to maintain professional conduct and appearance, maintain patient confidentiality, and operate within the scope of practice.	• Possess the emotional health required to deliver patient care. • Respond professionally and appropriately to emergency situations. • Demonstrate empathy for patients and peers, exhibit sensitivity to the needs of others', and treat all with dignity and respect. • Maintain composure in clinical and didactic environments. • Demonstrate professional in classroom, lab, and clinical settings including but not limited to appropriate personal hygiene, timeliness, preparation, and concentration.
Visual Ability	• Demonstrate visual acuity sufficient to monitor and assess patient status and to read written, hand written, and printed material.	• Discern changes in skin or wound color and condition. • Read numbers and letters in fine print, such as would appear on patient care equipment, in varying levels of light accurately.
Auditory Ability	• Demonstrate hearing acuity sufficient to communicate and interact with patients, pharmacists, and other health care professionals. • Demonstrate hearing acuity sufficient to successfully interact with clinical environment.	• Detect high and low frequency sounds, such as faint voices, telephones, and monitor alarms. • Hear conversations well enough to communicate with patients, peers, instructors, and other members of the health care team.
Tactile Ability	• Demonstrate tactile ability sufficient for patient care, physical assessment, and intervention.	• Identify tremors, vibrations, edema, or skin changes in various body areas. • Identify physical characteristics such as bony landmarks, muscles, and tendons. • Palpate accurately carotid, radial, femoral, and pedal pulses.
Olfactory Ability	• Demonstrate olfactory ability sufficient to assess patients and healthcare environment. • Demonstrate olfactory ability sufficient to detect unusual odors/smells emanating from patients and/or the environment.	• Detect malodorous or unusual odors from bodily fluids and wounds. • Distinguish smells which contribute to assessing and/or maintaining the patient's health status and environment (fire, noxious fumes, etc.).
Strength and Mobility	• Demonstrate physical abilities and strength sufficient to perform clinical and emergency procedures. • Demonstrate energy and vitality sufficient to interact with people of all ages and to help them accomplish their tasks.	• Maintain balance in any position. • Demonstrate ability to maneuver in small spaces (walk, stand, and bend over) while providing patient care. • Quickly intervene for a patient's health and safety, including the ability to perform

	• Demonstrate ability to freely walk, stand, sit, squat, balance, climb, reach, grip, lift, pull, and push as needed in the performance of clinical duties. • Demonstrate ability to move in tight quarters. • Demonstrate proper body mechanics. • Demonstrate ability to stand for long periods of time. • Demonstrate ability to move quickly to perform direct patient care.	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), if needed. • Demonstrate strength to position, lift, move, and transfer patients. • Push or pull heavy objects such as occupied hospital beds and gurneys, physical agent units, and lift and move heavy equipment with assistance. • Lift and/or carry up to 50 pounds frequently and safely and occasionally more than 50 pounds, in a clinical setting. • Demonstrate ability to effectively use appropriate ergonomic techniques (good body mechanics). • Move quickly when needed.
Motor Skills	• Demonstrate gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to perform safe and effective patient care, as well as providing safe environments and responding to unexpected situations in a timely manner. • Demonstrate physical ability sufficient to maneuver in small spaces (including standing, walking, bending, and range-of-motion of extremities).	• Maneuver patients' limbs. • Manipulate small objects. • Write legibly. • Use electronic devices. • Demonstrate keyboarding skills sufficient to complete data entry and/or clinical duties in a timely manner.
Physical Endurance	• Demonstrate sufficient physical endurance to complete assigned periods, the required shift, and assigned tasks.	• Work for 8 hours or more. • Sit or stand for long periods of time, including up to 4 hours.
Environmental Tolerance	• Demonstrate ability to function safely in a typical clinical environment. • Demonstrate awareness that the health care environment may contain latex and other allergens, including but not limited to medication (topical and ingestible), chemical, and mundane; tolerance of such allergens in the work place must also be demonstrated. • Demonstrate ability to wear Personal Protective Equipment, or P.P.E., for extended periods of time during patient care. • Demonstrate ability to tolerate prolonged periods of time amidst artificial lighting, air conditioning, dust and odors, residue from cleaning products, noise, congested workplace, and bodily fluids.	• Wear gloves, mask, protective eyewear and gown for extended periods of time during patient treatment, educational study, and labs. • Perform Universal Precautions to work safely in an environment that includes respiratory and blood borne pathogens. • Don and remove isolation garb.

	• Demonstrate sensitivity and ability to protect self and others from environmental risks and hazards.	
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Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

If you have a disability or acquire one, you may be entitled to receive support services and/or accommodations intended to assure you an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, the program. Reasonable accommodations for students with disability-related needs will be determined on an individual basis taking into consideration the standards and essential skills which must be performed to meet the program objectives. To receive more information or to apply for services, please contact the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office at (562) 860-2451 ext. 2335, visit them in the Liberal Arts/SAS Building, or apply for services via the [SAS online application](#). All prospective and current Physical Therapist Assistant students must be able to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations.