



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Commonwealth University PA Program

Technical Standards

To ensure that patients receive the best medical care possible, a candidate for the Master of Health Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies conferred by Commonwealth University must have abilities and skills in five different areas: motor skills, observation skills, critical thinking/intellectual ability, interpersonal abilities, and communication skills/professionalism. These abilities and skills are defined in the following descriptions. These abilities will be essential for the student's progression in the program and in the student's achievement of the skills and competencies that they need for future practice including clinical and technical skills, clinical reasoning and problem-solving abilities, interpersonal skills, medical knowledge, and professionalism.

Reasonable accommodation can be made for disabilities in certain areas; however, a candidate should be able to perform in a reasonably independent manner and must perform these essential requirements. Students who are aware of disabilities that may affect their performance in these areas should consult the Office of Disability Services for Students (205 Ulmer Hall, 570-484-2665) to be considered for further evaluation and potential accommodations. This will allow the PA Program to provide accommodations as appropriate based on recommendations from the Office of Disability Services for Students.

1. Motor Skills

The student should have sufficient strength and coordination to perform the activities of a physician assistant. The student should have sufficient motor coordination to move about patient care environments and sufficient dexterity to use common medical instruments. The student must have sufficient stamina to sit, stand, and move within the classroom, lab space, examination rooms, treatment rooms, and operating rooms for long periods of time. The student must be able to use varying sizes of medical equipment, execute movements required for moving patients, positioning patients, and providing care to patients routinely and in emergency settings. Typically, the student should be able to lift a minimum of 50 lbs. unassisted.

2. Observation Skills

The student must be able to observe a patient accurately, both at a distance and close at hand. Students must possess sufficient visual, auditory, and tactile sensation to receive appropriate information in the classroom, laboratory, and other educational and clinical settings. The ability to process sensory information must be satisfactory to receive verbal



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and nonverbal communications from patients and others, and to perform inspection, auscultation and palpation techniques during the physical examination.

3. Critical Thinking/Intellectual Ability

The student must possess the intellectual and emotional capabilities required to undertake the full PA Program curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence in critical thinking and problem solving required to see entry to the PA profession. The student must be able to solve problems, a critical skill to practice medicine, which requires the intellectual abilities of measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, and synthesis. Intellectual abilities also encompass learning and retaining information and the ability to make decisions in a timely manner. The student must be able to learn through a variety of modalities, including, but not limited to, classroom instruction; small group, team and collaborative activities; individual study; preparation and presentation of reports; and use of computer technology. Candidates must be able to memorize, measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, and transmit information across modalities.

4. Interpersonal Skills

The student must be able to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships. The student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities required for the diagnosis and care of patients with the ability to prioritize competing demands and function in stressful circumstances. The student should demonstrate emotional resilience and stability, adaptability, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety. The student should be compassionate, empathetic, responsible, and tolerant toward patients, families, and colleagues.

5. Communications Skills/Professionalism

The student should know their professional and personal limitations. The student should demonstrate a high level of responsibility, ethical practice, sensitivity to diverse populations, and adherence to all legal and regulatory requirements. The student must be able to effectively speak, to hear, and to observe patients to elicit information, assess mood, activity, and posture, and perceive nonverbal communications. The student must be able to communicate effectively and attentively, showing sensitivity, using oral, written, and electronic forms of communication with other clinicians, patients, and families. The student must be able to respond to these communications appropriately and in a timely manner.