

**Greenville Technical College  
Physical Therapist Assistant Program**

**Essential Functions and Technical Standards  
For Physical Therapist Assistant Students**

The following standards reflect reasonable expectations of a student in the PTA Program for the performance of common physical therapy functions. In adopting these standards the PTA Program is mindful of the patient's right to safe and quality treatment by a skilled PTA. These skills are necessary for the PTA to function in a broad variety of clinical situations while providing the spectrum of physical therapy interventions. These standards generally reflect what may be required for employment of the graduate PTA. **Upon admission, to verify that a student has the ability to perform these essential functions, students may be required to demonstrate the following technical standards:**

|          | <b>Categories of Essential Functions</b>        | <b>Definition</b>  | <b>Example of Technical Standard</b>   |
|----------|---|--|--|
| <b>1</b> | Critical Thinking/<br>Problem Solving<br>Skills | Ability to collect, interpret and integrate information and make decisions.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect, interpret and integrate information and make decisions.</li> <li>• Read and comprehend relevant information in textbooks, medical records and professional literature.</li> <li>• Identify cause/effect relationships in the provision of health care.</li> <li>• Identify patient problems and adjust patient goals and interventions appropriately within the health care team plan of care.</li> <li>• Respond calmly and effectively to emergencies.</li> <li>• Know when and how to apply universal precautions.</li> <li>• Use effective teaching, learning and test taking strategies.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2</b> | Interpersonal Skills                            | Ability to collaboratively work with all PTA students and with program faculty in the classroom, lab and clinical setting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively with all PTA students, faculty and staff, clinicians and patients in classroom, lab and clinical settings.</li> <li>• Embody the spirit of cooperation and collegiality, employing basic conflict management skills as situations require.</li> <li>• Establish positive and supportive rapport with patients/clients and colleagues.</li> <li>• Participate in all lab situations to experience both clinician and patient roles, receiving and communicating empathy.</li> <li>• Establish positive, supportive, effective and harmonious relationships in diverse settings, with diverse patient/clients and colleagues.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3</b> | Behavioral/Emotional<br>/Social Coping Skills   | Ability to respond appropriately to stressful environments or during impending deadlines.                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond appropriately to stressful environments or during impending deadlines.</li> <li>• Display maturity, good judgment, sensitivity, and emotional stability when in academic and professional settings.</li> <li>• Manage heavy academic schedules and deadlines.</li> <li>• Concentrate on professional duties without distraction in all settings.</li> <li>• Set priorities and perform all aspects of therapy services in fast-paced academic and clinical situations.</li> <li>• Cope effectively with psychosocial issues involving illness, disability and death without hindering effective performance of duties.</li> </ul>                   |

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|---|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 4 | Communication Skills               | Ability to communicate effectively in English using verbal, non-verbal and written formats with faculty, other students, patients, families, and health care workers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate effectively in English using verbal, non-verbal and written formats with faculty, other students, patients, families, and health care workers.</li> <li>• Describe and teach physical therapy procedures in both oral and written format.</li> <li>• Give directions to patients and family members.</li> <li>• Answer questions to the satisfaction of patients, co-workers, physicians and other health care providers.</li> <li>• Keep accurate logs and records of treatment procedures and charges using appropriate medical terminology, correct spelling and grammar?</li> <li>• Demonstrate active listening skills. Recognize, interpret and respond to non-verbal behavior of self and others.</li> </ul>  |
| 5 | Physical Mobility/<br>Motor Skills | Sufficient motor ability to execute the movement and skills required for safe and effective physical therapy treatment.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Execute the movement and skills required for safe and effective physical therapy treatment.</li> <li>•Demonstrate adequate coordination, balance, speed and agility to assist and safely manage patients who are walking on level and unlevel terrain to include: stairs, ramps, grass/gravel, curbs, and diverse home flooring.</li> <li>•Demonstrate and perform exercise programs and functional activities required of established patient care interventions without injuring self or others.</li> <li>•Move, adjust and position patients or equipment which involves bending, stooping freely to the floor, reaching overhead, lifting, pulling or guiding a weight of 200-250 pounds.</li> <li>•Provide emergency care and administer CPR.</li> <li>•Stand, kneel, sit, walk or crawl for 90 minutes without rest.</li> <li>•Perform transfer and gait training techniques using correct and safe body mechanics.</li> <li>•Manipulate with sufficient dexterity bi-manually the devices used in physical therapy, such as adjusting gauges, dials with one hand while moving thermal/electric devices with the other hand.</li> <li>•Manipulate small nuts/bolts, and therapy equipment settings with sufficient hand strength and dexterity.</li> </ul> |

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|---|--|---|---|
| 6 | Sensory Abilities                        | Sufficient auditory, visual and tactile ability to monitor and assess health needs. | <p>Monitor and assess patient's health needs with sufficient auditory, visual and tactile acuity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Visual</u> – (corrected as necessary) recognize and interpret facial expressions and body language and patient posture, identify normal and abnormal patterns of movement, discriminate color changes and interpret and assess the environment up to 20 feet; read or set parameters on physical therapy equipment.</li> <li>• <u>Auditory</u> – (corrected as necessary) recognize and respond to soft voices or voices under protective garb, auditory timers, equipment/emergency alarms, and effectively use devices for the measurement of vital signs and breathe sounds. Be able to hear patients and respond to patient critical needs when not in direct line of site.</li> <li>• <u>Tactile</u> –palpate a pulse and detect changes or abnormalities of surface texture, skin temperature, body segment contour, muscle tone and joint movement.</li> </ul> |
| 7 | Professionalism                          | Ability to demonstrate professional behaviors and a strong work ethic.              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate unselfish, honest, moral and ethical behavior in all academic and professional settings.</li> <li>• Take initiative; be creative, prepared, flexible, enthusiastic, cooperative, tolerant, respectful of authority, and industrious in all academic, clinical and professional settings.</li> <li>• Demonstrate time management skills that promote punctual attendance to class, labs and clinics as required.</li> <li>• Demonstrate a work ethic consistent with professional standards.</li> <li>• Recognize personal limitations and request assistance as appropriate.</li> <li>• Demonstrate responsibility for personal and professional development.</li> <li>• Demonstrate respect for the patient, other health care providers and the profession of physical therapy.</li> <li>• Maintain confidences.</li> <li>• Present professional appearance and maintain personal hygiene.</li> </ul>  |