

Academic and Technical Standard for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program

The Physical Therapist Assistant program has a responsibility to educate competent practitioners to care for their patients with critical judgment, broadly based knowledge, and well-developed technical skills. The Physical Therapist Assistant program has academic as well as technical standards that must be met by students in order to successfully progress in and graduate from its programs.

Academic and Technical Standards: The Physical Therapist Assistant Program (PTA) provides the following general descriptions/examples to inform prospective and enrolled students of the academic and technical standards required in completing the program curriculum.

1. The academic and technical standards include examples of the performance abilities and characteristics that are necessary to successfully complete the requirements of the PTA program. These standards are not requirements of admission into the programs and the examples are not all-inclusive.
2. Individuals interested in applying for admission to the PTA program should review these standards to develop a better understanding of the skills, abilities and behavioral characteristics required to successfully complete the programs. Key areas for academic and technical standards include:
 - (1) Acquiring fundamental knowledge;
 - (2) Developing communication skills;
 - (3) Interpreting data;
 - (4) Integrating knowledge to establish clinical judgment;
 - (5) Performance of skills associated with physical therapy practice, and
 - (6) Incorporating appropriate professional attitudes and behaviors into clinical practice capabilities.

Roane State Community College requires that access to its facilities, programs and services is available to all students; including students with disabilities (as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008) and all students can study with or without reasonable accommodation. The PTA program provides reasonable accommodations to all students on a nondiscriminatory basis consistent with legal requirements as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to an instructional activity, equipment, facility, program or service that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to fulfill the requirements necessary for graduation from the program. To be eligible for accommodations, a student must have a documented disability of (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; (b) a record of such impairment; or, (c) be regarded as having such a condition.

Requirements

1. Acquiring fundamental knowledge

Standards

1. Ability to learn in classroom and educational settings
2. Ability to find sources of knowledge and acquire the knowledge

Examples

- Acquire, conceptualize, and apply evidence-based information from demonstrations and experiences in the basic and applied sciences, including

Requirements

Standards

3. Ability to be a life-long learner
4. Demonstrate novel and adaptive thinking

Examples

but not limited to information conveyed through online coursework, lecture, group seminar, small group activities and physical demonstrations

- Develop health care solutions beyond that which is rote or protocol-based

Requirements

2. Developing communication skills

Standards

1. Communication abilities for sensitive and effective interactions with patients (persons, families and/or communities)
2. Communication abilities for effective interaction with the health care team (patients, their supports, other professional and non-professional team members)
3. Sense-making of information gathered from communication
4. Social intelligence

Examples

- Accurately elicit or interpret information: medical history and other info to adequately and effectively evaluate a client or patient's condition
- Accurately convey information and interpretation of information using one or more means of communication (verbal, written, assisted (such as TTY) and/or electronic) to patients and the health care team
- Effectively communicate in teams
- Determine a deeper meaning or significance in what is being expressed
- Connect with others to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions

3. Interpreting data

1. Ability to observe patient conditions and responses to health and illness
2. Ability to assess and monitor health needs
3. Computational thinking
4. Cognitive load management

- Obtain and interpret information from assessment maneuvers such as assessing respiratory and cardiac function, blood pressure, blood sugar, neurological status, etc.
- Obtain and interpret information from diagnostic representations of physiologic phenomena during a comprehensive assessment of patients

Requirements

Standards

Examples

- Interpret information from assessment of patient's environment and responses to health across the continuum
- Obtain and interpret for evaluation information about responses to prescribed treatment

Requirements

4. Integrating knowledge to establish clinical judgment

Standards

1. Critical thinking, problem-solving and decision making ability needed to care for patients and/or communities across the health continuum
2. Intellectual and conceptual abilities to master the required knowledge and competencies of the program

Examples

- Accomplish, direct or interpret assessment of patients and/or communities and implement plans of care or direct the implementation of care
- Critically assess and develop content that uses new media forms, and to leverage these media for persuasive communication
- Literacy in and ability to understand concepts across disciplines
- Represent and develop tasks and work processes for desired outcomes

5. Performance of skills associated with physical therapy practice

1. Gross and fine motor skills sufficient to provide safe and effective physical therapy skills
2. Ability to lift and move patients and simulated patients using an appropriate level of assistance without risk of injury to self or others

- Maintain and use patient care equipment
- Bend, stoop, squat and lift numerous times per day up to 60 lbs
- Move around in small workspaces

Requirements

6. Incorporating appropriate professional attitudes and behaviors into physical therapy practice

Standards

1. Demonstrate concern for others, integrity, ethical conduct, accountability, interest and motivation
2. Acquire Interpersonal skills for professional interactions with a diverse population of individuals, families and communities
3. Acquire Interpersonal skills for professional interactions with members of the health care team including patients, their supports, other health care professionals and team members
4. Acquire the skills necessary for promoting change for necessary quality health care
5. Cross-cultural competency
6. Virtual collaboration
7. Apply healthy stress management techniques

Examples

- Maintain effective, mature, and sensitive relationships with clients/patients, students, faculty, staff and other professionals under all circumstances
- Make proper judgments regarding safe and quality care
- Function effectively under stress and adapt to changing environments inherent in clinical practice
- Demonstrate professional role in interactions with patients, intra and inter professional teams
- Operate in different cultural settings (including disability culture)
- Work productively, drive engagement, and demonstrate presence as a member of a virtual team
- Use appropriate judgment in stressful situations

Mental and Physical Qualifications for Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) practitioners

(also called Essential Standards and Functions)

Introduction: Professional PTA practice requires specific qualifications, abilities, knowledge, and skills. Typically, PTA employers specify these as “minimal essential standards and functions” for employment as a PTA practitioner. Although qualifications may vary among employers, the following list is provided to enable applicants and accepted students to informally assess their own capabilities for the physical therapy profession prior to entering the PTA program.

Essential Standards and Functions:

1. Work in a standing position and do frequent walking for twelve hours.
2. Frequently lift and transfer adult and child patients up to six inches from a stooped position, and push or pull the weight of an adult up to three feet.
3. Frequently lift and transfer adult and child patients from a stooped to an upright position to accomplish bed to-chair and chair-to-bed transfers.
4. Frequently bend, stoop and squat in a variety of situations including small or awkward spaces.
5. Use hands, wrists, and arms to physically apply up to ten pounds of pressure in the performance of specific procedures (e.g., to perform tests of muscle strength or prevent a patient fall).
6. Respond and react immediately to verbal instructions and requests, auditory sounds from monitoring equipment, and perform auditory assessments of patients.
7. Be able to move freely and physically maneuver in small spaces.
8. Possess sufficient visual acuity to perform close and distant visual activities involving objects, persons, and paperwork, as well as the ability to discriminate depth and color perception.
9. Read calibrated scales of one-hundredth increments in not more than a three-inch space.
10. Possess sufficient fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination to use small instruments and equipment.
11. Possess tactile ability sufficient to assess patient status through palpation including muscle tone, joint end-feel and muscle spasm
12. Discriminate between sharp and dull, hot and cold.
13. Perform mathematical calculations for preparation and application of biophysical agents.
14. Communicate effectively in the English language, both orally and in writing, using appropriate grammar, spelling, vocabulary and word usage.
15. Comprehend verbal and written directions and make appropriate notations.
16. Access patient/client information from written or electronic record and be able to document care provided using legible handwriting, a desk top computer or a portable device.
17. Develop the ability to make appropriate and timely decisions under stressful situations.
18. Demonstrate sufficient endurance to complete up to a twelve hour clinical rotation.
19. Use critical thinking abilities to apply clinical judgement and implement individual patient care decisions within the physical therapy plan of care.
20. Use interpersonal skills to interact with individuals from a variety of social, economic, religious, racial, ethnic, cultural and intellectual backgrounds.