

ESSENTIAL STUDENT FUNCTIONS

Certain abilities are considered essential for student success in program completion as well as fulfilling the job requirements of a physical therapist assistant. Students and potential students should carefully review these essential functions. You will be asked to sign a form stating you are aware of and able to perform these functions and can meet the physical and emotional requirements of the PTA Program. Students must understand that failure to be able to perform these functions may prevent you from program completion, obtaining licensure or employment as a physical therapist assistant.

1. Intellectual ability to pass each PHT course with a minimum grade of "C" (75%) or better.
2. Ability to achieve competency level performance (75%) in all laboratory physical therapy procedures, as well as achieve appropriate level performance (varying from 50% to 100% depending upon the specific clinical rotation) in clinical physical therapy procedures which includes but is not limited to:
 - a. The ability to sit 2-5 hours per day for lecture classes.
 - b. The ability to stand and be physically active for sustained periods of time (6 hour laboratories/8 hour clinic days).
 - c. The ability to be physically active for the majority of a 40 hour week during clinical affiliations (bending, reaching, lifting, pulling, pushing, standing, and walking, repeatedly throughout an 8 hour period).
 - d. Push/pull, lift, transfer and gait train patients 50 lbs. – 100 lbs. + independently and 200+ lbs. with assist.
 - e. Guarding patients' safety during ambulation activities on level surfaces, ramps and stairs using canes, walkers, crutches and wheelchairs.
 - f. Performing protocol procedures for sterile technique with all sizes of whirlpools.
 - g. Performing debridement technique on open wounds.
 - h. Communicating effectively in English (reading, hearing, speaking and writing) utilizing appropriate grammar and vocabulary with classmates, faculty, the physical therapist, patients, families and members of the healthcare team and with consideration to individuals from a variety of different age groups, social, emotional, cultural, religious and intellectual backgrounds.
 - i. Applying superficial and deep thermal agents effectively and safely on patients.
 - j. Applying cervical/lumbar traction units effectively and safely to patients.
 - k. Reading and manipulating dials to accurately set intensity, duration, etc. for electrical modality procedures.
 - l. Applying graded manual resistance to patient's individual muscle groups for the purpose of determining the patient's strength, and applying exercise techniques for range of motion, coordination, strengthening, stretching and motor control.
 - m. Applying cuff weights, dumbbells and sandbag weights to facilitate strengthening exercises.
 - n. Applying specialized exercise equipment to patients (e.g., BAPS Board, therapeutic balls, Total Gym, Biodex, weighted pulley systems, Rebounder)
 - o. Progressing patients on exercise programs effectively and safely.

- p. Demonstrating good body mechanics in the process of performing patient transfers and all treatment techniques.
 - q. Setting up treatment areas and the cleaning and maintaining of laboratory and clinical equipment.
 - r. Performing appropriate and accurate measurements of vital signs - including temperature, pulse, respiration and blood pressure.
 - s. Performing accurate goniometric and anthropometric measurements.
 - t. Performing massage techniques to the trunk and extremities.
 - u. Documenting treatment in clear, concise and accurate notes in the patient's chart.
 - v. Responding to patients' assistance call devices and treatment duration devices in a timely and appropriate manner.
 - w. Draping and positioning patients in an appropriate manner for treatment.
 - x. Educating patients and caregivers as directed by the physical therapist.
 - y. Assisting patients in applying prosthetics and orthotics.
 - z. Applying passive and active-assistive ROM exercises effectively and safely on patients.
3. Displaying maturity, good judgment and emotional stability in fast-paced academic and clinical settings (managing a heavy academic schedule, deadlines, accepting performance feedback.
 4. Can obtain and maintain current CPR* and first aid certifications.
*Note: CPR certification must include both a didactic and practical (demonstration) component; a purely on-line course will not suffice.
 5. Can utilize and adhere to universal precautions - (mask, gown, gloves) when treating patients with potentially contagious diseases.
 6. Can demonstrate the ability to work as a team member during group projects by: actively contributing to the project, being flexible in group meeting times, openness to other group members' input.
 7. Conduct active research utilizing texts, journals, and on-line resources to incorporate evidence- based information for academic papers, case studies and physical therapy interventions for use with patients.
 8. Utilize technology for course work, patient interventions and documentation.

Approved by the PTA Advisory Committee 5/19/94

Revised as suggested by Dr. Susan Blanchard, LD Resource Specialists, 12/1/94.

Revised 4/3/02.

Revised 5/19/06

Revised 6/15/09

Services for Students with Disabilities