

Guilford Technical Community College
Physical Therapist Assistant Program
Technical Standards

- A. A candidate for the Physical Therapist Assistant Program must have abilities and skills in six categories: observation, communication, sensorimotor, intellectual, emotional, and interpersonal. Reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities will be considered on an individual basis, but a candidate must be able to perform in an independent manner.
- B. All students in the Physical Therapist Assistant program must possess the intellectual ability to learn, integrate, analyze and synthesize data. They must have functional use of the senses of vision, hearing, equilibrium, and smell. Their exteroceptive (touch, pain, temperature) and proprioceptive (position, pressure, movement, stereognosis, and vibratory) senses must be sufficiently intact to enable them to carry out all activities required for a complete PTA education. The candidate must possess the following abilities and skills:
1. Observation: A candidate must be able to observe a patient accurately at a distance and close at hand. Observation necessitates the functional use of the sense of vision and other sensory modalities. The candidate must be able to observe demonstrations and learn from experiences in the basic sciences and in the clinical physical therapy laboratory such as accurately reading dials on electrotherapeutic equipment and numbers on a goniometer, assess normal and abnormal color changes in the skin and palpate various body parts.
 2. Communication: A candidate must be able to assimilate information from written sources (texts, journals, notes, medical records, etc.). The candidate must be able to attain, comprehend, retain, and utilize new information presented in written formats as well as produce appropriate written documentation. A candidate must be able to speak with, hear, and observe patients in order to elicit information, perceive nonverbal communications, and describe changes in mood, activity, and posture. The candidate must be able to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, and efficiently and effectively with the heart-care team, orally and in writing.

3. **Sensorimotor:** A candidate must have sufficient gross motor, fine motor, and equilibrium functions to elicit information from patients by palpation, auscultation, percussion, and other data collection skills. A candidate must be able to execute movements required to provide therapeutic intervention (e.g., patient transfers, exercise, and application of electrotherapy) and emergency treatment. Quick reactions are necessary not only for safety, but for efficient and effective therapeutic intervention. The student must have the ability to move him or herself and the patient in order to perform motor function tests and treatment. Additionally, the student must be able to ensure the physical safety of a patient at all times. Such skills require coordination of gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and sensation (hearing, vision, smell, and touch).
 4. **Intellectual-Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities:** A candidate must be capable of these abilities which include, but are not limited to, measurement, calculation, reasoning, analysis, synthesis and retention of complex information. Problem-solving is a critical skill demanded of physical therapist assistants, one that involves all these abilities. The candidate must also be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and spatial relationships of structures.
 5. **Emotional:** A candidate must have the emotional health to use fully his or her intellectual abilities, the exercise good judgment, and the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the care of patients.
 6. **Interpersonal:** A candidate must be able to develop mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and colleagues. Ability to tolerate physical and emotional stress and continue to function effectively is a must. A candidate must be adaptable, flexible, and able to function in the face of uncertainty. He or she must have integrity, the motivation to serve a high level of compassion, and a consciousness of social values. A candidate needs the interpersonal skills to interact positively with people from all levels of society, ethnic backgrounds, and beliefs.
- C. A deficiency in the abilities listed above can severely diminish a candidate's chances of success in school and in the profession. It is the responsibility of the student with disabilities to request those accommodations that he/she thinks are reasonable and are needed to execute the essential functions described.